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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR®

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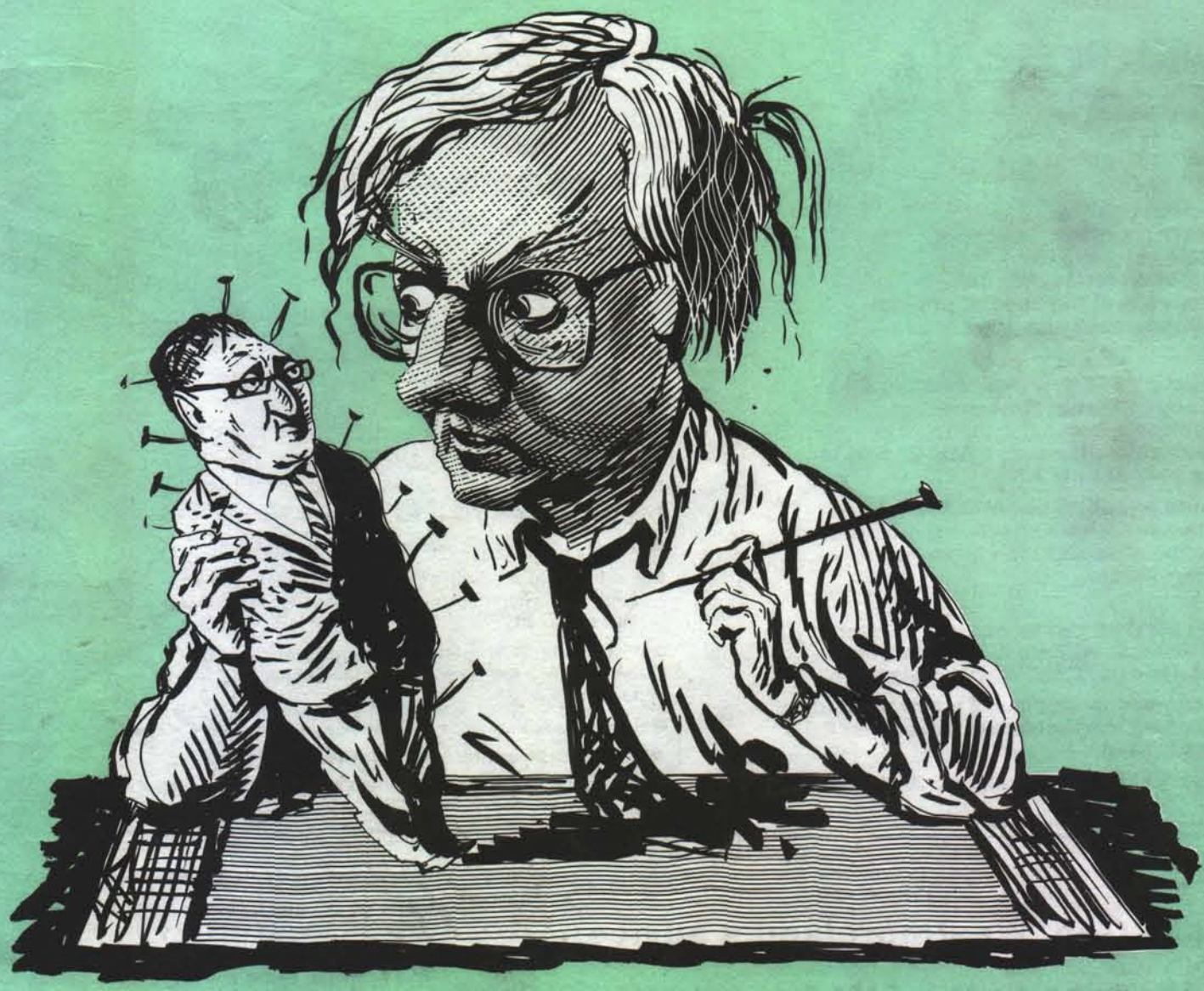

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EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

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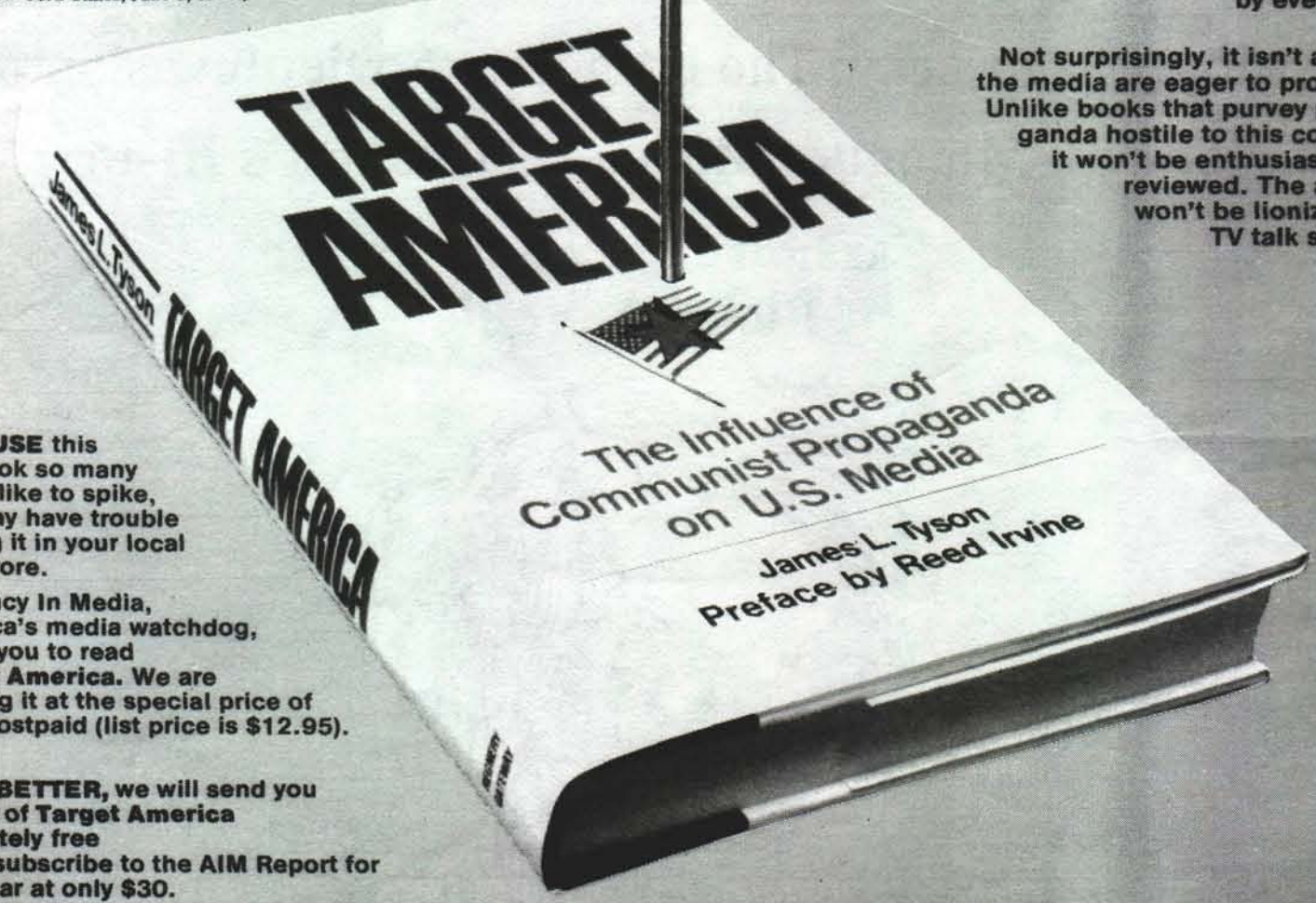

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The American Spectator was founded in 1924 by George Nathan and Truman Newberry over a cheap domestic ale in McSorley's Old Ale House. In 1967 the Saturday Evening Club took it over, rechristening it *The Alternative: An American Spectator*; but by November 1977 the word "alternative" had acquired such an esoteric fragrance that in order to discourage unsolicited manuscripts from florists, beauticians, and other creative types the Club reverted to the magazine's original name. *The American Spectator* is now published monthly at 102 West Sixth Street, Bloomington, Indiana. Second class postage paid at Bloomington, IN, and additional mailing offices.

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

•Heat, record heat, ravaged our nation's lawns, corn fields, and pig farms this July, yet the tenor of public debate remained serene, even dreamlike. Alan Cranston went to his barber to have his surviving hair made brown, and a chivalrous Gary Hart told the National Women's Political Caucus: "You have become the moral leadership of the country." Jimmy Carter spent a day in Waycross, Georgia, visiting with brother Billy, who's a director of housing there for a mobile home company. And Princeton international affairs expert Richard Ullman, who just one year ago landed his glider atop a 72,000 volt power line, drew on his expertise again to assure *New York Times* readers that the Soviets have no reason to establish bases in Central America for the simple reason that "Moscow already has bases in Cuba at its disposal. Why should it seek new ones?"

•Yes, there were some who tried to heighten tensions. Hodding Carter, for example, calling Henry Kissinger "morally boneless," reviving Cold War rhetoric by labeling the countries of Central America "captive nations" of the U.S., joining with *Newsweek,* Red China, and Cuba to denounce the Reagan Administration's "gunboat diplomacy" in the region, and concluding: "We have become what we profess to oppose." Does he mean Communists? Or are we Sandinistas? Then what about our anti-illiteracy campaign? Why has the University of the District of Columbia just suspended 797 students for poor academic performance and placed an additional 2,668 on probation? I'm afraid to ask about polio.

•But back to basics. July 29 was a hot, sunny day in Predappio, Italy, where a police helicopter hovered overhead and nearly 100 uniformed policemen watched as thousands of black-shirted men and women chanting "Duce! Duce!" marched through the native village of Benito Mussolini on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of his birth. On July 19 the Berkeley city council voted 7-2 to establish a sister-city program with San Antonio Los Ranchos, a rebel-controlled town of 400 in El Salvador, and President Castro of Cuba has expressed interest in visiting Britain soon at the invitation of the Milk Marketing Board.

•On July 28, thermometers hit 101 degrees in Prague, the highest reading there since the reign of Joseph II, and in Greece the Papandreou government attempted to promote tourism with the creation of nudist centers at hotels and campsites, whereupon a Swede vacationing on the Greek island of Kos promptly came down with typhoid fever. In Poland, it was announced that more than 800,000 Poles have quit the Communist Party in the past three years, and a government spokesman said that his country expects "appropriate compensation" of "several billion dollars" from the U.S. for economic losses suffered by Poland under martial law. Meanwhile Polish deputy justice minister Tadeusz Skora voiced concern about "the image of our country abroad." Why should he worry? On July 5, Moscow bestowed its highest award, the Order of Lenin, on Wojciech Jaruzelski, while in San Francisco admirers of the General's style filed suit in federal court to find out "whether the U.S. government plans to declare martial law after a nuclear attack." If that's not enough for Mr. Skora, he may be pleased to learn that Anne Pawelek of Cicero, Illinois has filed a $10 million lawsuit on behalf of all Polish-Americans against Paramount Studios for Polack jokes repeated in the hit movie *Flashdance.*

•In publishing news, the editors of *Swank* magazine say they will publish photos of Yoko Ono and John Lennon in "love-making poses," and Sphinx Press of New York has just released a series of "outstanding USSR books published in English for the first time." Among the titles are Boris Ponomarev's *Communism in a Changing World* ("why do Communists condemn terrorism"), *Structure of Soviet Psychiatry* by Edward A. Babayan ("why is drug addiction not a problem in the USSR"), and the latest official biography of the late Leonid Brezhnev ("an unusual book"). You might want to pass a word of thanks along to the *New Republic* which, recalling old times, perhaps, sold advertising space to Sphinx Press.

•Actually, there's no need to get carried away, since the effects of publishing were being felt in the Soviet Union as well. Back in 1979 the Krishna movement's publishing arm, the Bhatkivendanta Book Trust of Los Angeles, was permitted an exhibit at the International Book Fair in Moscow. Today the editors of *Izvestia* are lamenting the many Soviet lives ruined by the Swami cult, and the main problem seems to be that "the Krishnaists cannot return to their former normal life without psychiatric treatment." If you ask Ansel Adams, he might say Ronald Reagan is acting like a Soviet Krishna. After meeting with Reagan last month, Adams emerged to reveal that "there is that stone wall when someone has a totally different concept of the world and it's very hard to break through." It's time the White House picked up a copy of *Structure of Soviet Psychiatry.*

•On July 26, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, in response to protests from Congress and animal lovers, directed that "no dogs will be shot for medical experimentation or training by the Department of Defense," which, I must say, is a hell of a way to run an army. I hate for this to become a cliché, but we are falling behind the Russians. Just the other day, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* described the adventures of Amur, a German shepherd recruit from Gorky recently discharged after serving 18 months as an auxiliary sapper with Soviet forces in Afghanistan. When his handler, private Gennady Motilykov, was gravely injured, Amur stayed on for another six months and earned several military decorations, including a "gold service medal." Watch for him on Red Square this November 7.

•On July 20, the U.S. House of Representatives took time to censure Representatives Daniel Crane and Gerry Studds for illicit relations with teenage pages some years ago. As a conservative, Rep. Crane knew he'd done wrong and he took his punishment like a man. As for Rep. Studds,

RET is on vacation. He will return to this slot in the November issue.

DAVID NIVEN, R.I.P.

David Niven died at 73 on July 29. We hope it not too self-serving to pay tribute to him by citing a passage from his review of William Buckley's first book on sailing, *Airborne* (*TAS,* January 1977). Niven, you see, was a friend of Buckley's and thus uneasy about the propriety of reviewing a friend's book. His resolution of the dilemma was characteristic of his puckishness and grace:

. . . I was sent, between the ages of six and seventeen, to English boarding schools during their most ferocious period. The prefects (older boys in authority) were allowed to administer the cane to other boys. The number of strokes was ordained by the Headmaster who gleefully dealt with the more hardened criminals among us himself. Occasionally therefore it would transpire that friend would have to chastise friend; but to show there was no favoritism, a strict code of honor existed and friend laid mightily into friend if not with zeal at least with a certain sense of "fair play."

I have tried hard to be overly critical of Buckley's book and I have come up empty—I loved it!

He will be missed.

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well, he just added a whole new category to the list of those who never have to say they're sorry. Noting how philandering with pretty boys has made him a "more complete human being," he also warned that "all members of Congress are in need of humbling experiences from time to time." Careful bending over in the showerroom, men! Meanwhile, former Republican flamethrower Robert Bauman of Maryland, who lost his 1980 re-election bid after his arrest on Studds-like charges, is all set to begin a new life as a homosexual and political activist, according to friends. He is considering moving to San Francisco. It's getting lonely on the Right.

•In Hollywood, model Vicki Morgan, a pal of the late Alfred Bloomingdale, was batted to death by her roommate, Marvin Pancoast, for no special reason. But in San Jose, Robert Paul Yarrington knew what he was about when he asked his girlfriend, Connie Martinez, to chop off his foot with an ax. At least, that was the feeling of a Santa Clara County Superior Court jury which found Yarrington guilty of faking a motorcycle accident in an insurance fraud scheme. In Madrid, Rafael Escobedo was found guilty of murdering his father-in-law, Manuel de la Sierra, the Marquis of Urquijo, and his wife, the Marquise Marca Lourdes Urquijo. And from Washington John W. Hinckley Jr. sent word that "I would like to tell everyone concerned that I'm not the least bit dangerous."

•Finally, on July 20 ABC news saw its Washington presence diminished when anchorman Frank Reynolds died, and a week later NBC retaliated by dropping Roger Mudd as a co-anchor of the "NBC Nightly News." At last report Mr. Mudd was accusing his employers of "a general anti-Washington bias" and insisting "I did nothing shameful or unconscionable." Meanwhile, ABC's Roone Arledge denied he was hoping to hire Mudd. If I were Roone, I'd look into Chume Edozie, who, while doing the seven o'clock news on Nigerian state television on July 28, suddenly announced: "I am sorry I cannot with my conscience continue to read this news full of falsehood. I hereby resign my appointment with immediate effect." Television, here's your man for all seasons!

—WP

CORRESPONDENCE

The Lady is a Tramp

I hope *The American Spectator* is not trying to thin the ranks of its well-earned subscribers and lose its reputation as one of the last journals of sanity. How else to interpret the publication of "*Cosmo*'s Aging Vixen" by Rachel Flick (*TAS,* June 1983)? Miss Flick fails to mention the two insufferable flaws which run through Helen Gurley Brown's most recent tome.

First, the theme of the book is monotonously uniform, despite the seemingly diverse assortment of chapters in it. This theme is "Put on whatever airs are necessary, and fake it as much as you can, and you will make it big in this world." One wonders how it is possible to believe this woman is telling the truth, when she is essentially advising her readers to live a gigantic lie.

Second, Mrs. Brown claims to have men figured out and thus advises the reader to emulate her by putting vanity and lust before all else when dealing with them. She seems to think this is the only way to achieve success and be considered a woman of quality. Certainly men find a beautiful and passionate woman attractive, but no matter how attractive a woman is, or how well she provides sensual gratification, if she is also amoral, most men will ultimately find her contemptible. To put it bluntly, a tramp, no matter how beautiful, is still a tramp. . . .

Who knows? Maybe Mrs. Brown has already gotten the word. Why should she fear the loss of her "beauty" as much as she does, unless she knows what she is without it?

—Edward B. Elmer
Boston, Massachusetts

Cable Rights

David Wilkinson's article on the Founding Fathers and cable TV ("Porn, Cable TV, and Censorship," *TAS,* July 1983) reminds me of the H.L. Mencken quote that Puritans lay awake at night worrying that someone somewhere was having a good time. Obviously Wilkinson spends a lot of sleepless nights.

Toward the end of his article he mentions assaults on the "sensibilities of unwilling recipients" of blue broadcasts. Tell Mr. Wilkinson there ain't no such animal so long as there's a switch on the radio or TV.

—Thomas C. Duddy
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Thank God that we do not live in the Theocracy of Utah where insecure minds like David Wilkinson are elevated to Attorney General, from which position they dare to determine what we shall do in the privacy of our homes. How could your publication waste precious natural resources on his unfounded tirade against cable TV in the July issue?

His standard for broadband communication is appropriate. I do not care to have open reception to many things (although I would never condemn a group of consenting adults from doing, seeing or hearing them in a private circumstance.) Cable TV, however, is a narrowband "closed" form of communications and should be free from any censorship. I may not want to subscribe to certain program services offered over CATV but I should not deprive my neighbor of the right to them.

Furthermore, modern technology has provided the CATV industry with the lock-box converter. Adults in a household may want to indulge in certain programming at appropriate hours when the children are not near the television or in bed. The converter box allows them to "lock out" certain channels so that the children have access to the rest of the program offerings and, safely child-proofed for the evening, they simply unlock the converter for unscrambled access to their own tastes.

A free society should be less concerned with the attitudes and tastes of those outside the norm. By Wilkinson's logic, your publication should be censured for bringing Taki's writings into my home where our preteen girls might read him!

—Victor Berardelli
Medford, New Jersey

Stewed

It is appalling that a magazine with a dignified name such as yours would publish Ben Stein's vacuous pipe dreams about "stewardesses" (Flying Low in First Class," *TAS,* June 1983). One might expect this type of journalism in *Hustler* magazine.

Mr. Stein's remark that Marilyn, Vicki, and Valerie are not supposed to be taken as representative stewardesses is not vindication for the tens of thousands of women and men working as Flight Attendants in this country alone. The generic term "Flight Attendant" has been in use for ten years now and the fact that Mr. Stein is unaware of that might be an indication of where his head is. It has been said that one speaks as one lives.

Flight Attendants are required safety experts on board airplanes, proficient in life saving measures which is their primary function. Having been in this profession for almost 17 years, I can factually state that the popular myth fostered by Mr. Stein's slanderous article neither was nor is the norm among the women with whom I work. The vast majority of my membership are hard working safety and public service oriented individuals who, after working their flights, go home to their spouses, children, and mortgages like any other hard working American.

The perpetuation of the "stewardess" myth is a disservice to the passengers who come to imagine that friendliness and courtesy on the job means more than what it is. The greatest disservice, however, is that it robs our women of their dignity.

—Bruno Paluk
President/Association of Professional Flight Attendants
Euless, Texas

The Association of Professional Flight Attendants represents approximately 6500 Flight Attendants in the employ of American Airlines, Inc.

I found Benjamin J. Stein's article "Flying Low in First Class," (*TAS,* June 1983) to be a highly offensive affront against the professional flight attendant. Although Mr. Stein did, finally, add: "Marilyn, Vicki, and Valerie are not supposed to be taken as representative stewardesses. For all I know, most stewardesses are creatures of sober and regular habits. Marilyn, Vicki, and Valerie are far more than representative stewardesses. They are representative of a whole huge slice of a nation's deluded young women, deceived at an early age, who exist to be near money," he would have been far wiser to select examples for his

(*continued on page 48*)

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EDITORIALS

BLACK CATS

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Last month that black cat the Washington press corps had perceived arched atop a pile of Jimmy Carter's briefing papers slipped back toward oblivion, but that did not mean President Reagan could bask in the glow of benign news stories about low inflation and economic revival. Not at all; last month two more black cats crossed his path. This time the press corps was warning of the catastrophe he faces because of "the gender gap" and the alienation of blacks. The NAACP and the National Women's Political Caucus were holding their conventions and both groups were hollering for amiable Ron's blood. The pundits were reporting that unless he changes his policies he will be a goner with both groups.

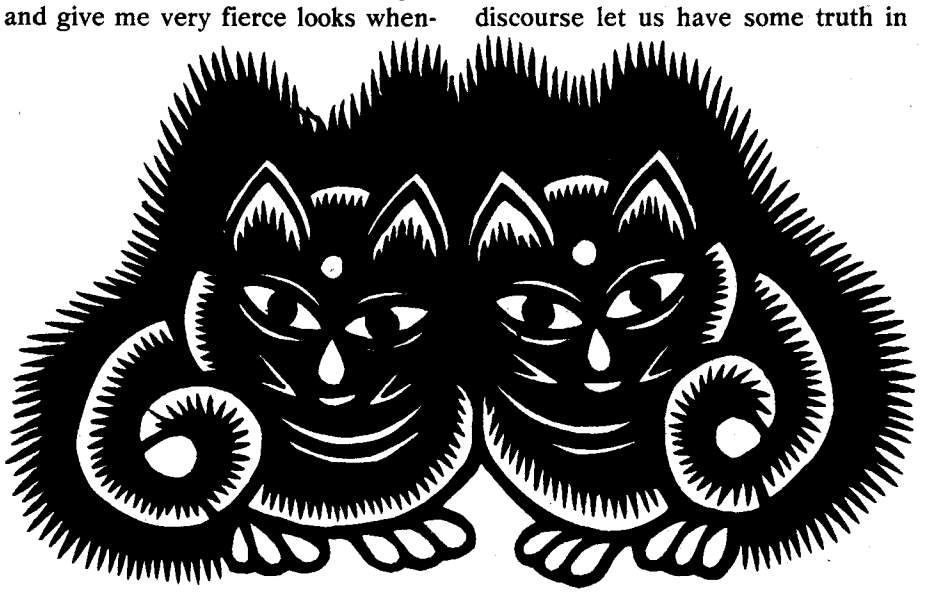
Well, in this glorious age of truth and candor I certainly wish we had some truth and candor. The reason the Reagan Administration is so disrelished by these groups is not that Ronald Reagan is opposed to women and blacks but that these groups are overwhelmingly liberal and he is a conservative. These groups do not represent all women or all blacks. They represent liberal women and liberal blacks. Ronald Reagan's disagreement with them is on grounds of political principle, yet so successfully do they manipulate the terms of political debate in the country that Reagan is made to appear moss-backed and prejudiced while the black leadership and the feminists are made to appear as victims of his hoary bigotries. The conclusion, always implied in the news stories and occasionally boldly stated by the pundits, is that Reagan must change his views to accommodate these liberals. Never is it suggested that they should change their views to accommodate him. In a word conservatism continues to be treated as a second-class political position, while liberalism is accorded hushed reverence, so much so that it can dictate to the press how it is to be described.

At the National Women's Political Caucus much was made of the fact that 35 percent of the 400 head of feminists in attendance were Republicans. Well, if memory serves, John Anderson was once a Republican, and there are liberal Republicans still, even as there are still flying fish and fish that survive outside of water. The fact is that all the issues favored at the convention—from the Equal Rights Amendment to the nuclear freeze—are liberal issues. A feminist is a liberal, albeit a loud liberal. The black leadership too is almost wholly composed of liberals favoring the same old liberal policies of ever more government, which is to say more inflation, taxation, political coercion, and economic hardship—the percentage of blacks below the poverty line in 1980, notwithstanding all the federal spending of the 1970s, was actually .3 percent higher than in 1969.

Given liberalism's policy failures I cannot blame the various special interest groups of the Left for confecting esoteric new labels for the same old hokum, but the press ought not to allow itself to be bamboozled. Is there really a "gender gap"? All the women in my life adore Reagan and give me very fierce looks whenever I am discourteous. Of course, being a man of taste, my woman friends are mainly conservatives, and they have waited a long time for a conservative President.

Nationally there is indeed some modest and persistent difference between the sexes on issues, as *Public Opinion* magazine reported some months ago, but the gap is nothing like that found at a feminist convention and on the so-called women's issues—abortion, the ERA—there is almost no difference between men and women. Moreover such differences as do exist have narrowed perceptibly by election day in our last two national elections.

The April/May issue of *Public Opinion* provides evidence that women's groups and the NAACP are not the only special interest groups that hide their fundamental liberalism beneath a toney label. According to social scientists S. Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman, the leaders of virtually all public interest groups, be it the Environmental Defense Fund or the American Civil Liberties Union, are thoroughly committed to liberalism and far left liberalism at that. "The liberalism of public interest leaders shades into profound dissatisfaction with the American social and economic order, a feeling not shared by the public," Lichter and Rothman write. So in our political discourse let us have some truth in packaging. Ronald Reagan's big problem is with American liberalism; that explains the black cats spied in his path by the press last month. □



Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

MITRED MOONSHINE

I for one am profoundly grateful to the editors of a vigorous new religious publication for explaining to me why I recently encountered a Roman Catholic priest wearing a pink suede suit. Possibly the suit was pink velvet. I did not allow myself to get close enough to verify the material. What alarmed me was not the gentleman's pink suit, however, but his rampancy on behalf of vegetarianism, or was it nuclear holocaust or human sexuality? I have forgotten. Whatever it was that inflamed him I do recall that he had it all wrong and that he was unusually disagreeable. Christian love was not apparent in his demeanor nor was the dignity that hitherto has so often distinguished the Catholic cleric even in the eyes of scoffers.

Dignity and charity seem to have vanished from large numbers of Roman Catholic priests and nuns, and now the editors of *Catholicism in Crisis,* a journal published at Notre Dame's Jacques Maritain Center, explain that all this is a consequence of the Catholic clergy's growing absorption with left-wing politics and style. But hold, these *nouveau gauche* are not your down-home populists with that gentle Will Rogers aura. "There is a manifest and tangible clericalization of the Catholic church," the editors explain, "worse now than before. . . . More and more often, priests and bishops make political, economic and social pronouncements about the temporal order, to which the laity is expected solely to react. This is an inversion of vocations and roles." Thus do not expect these New Age clerics to be from the Mother Teresa of Calcutta mold.

Of course America is not Spain,

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and clericalism collides with one of our most famous values, the separation of church and state. America being America, this does not bode well for the Church.

It does bode well, however, for those American Catholics who would like to follow their own muse on matters of personal morality. Increasingly the American Catholic clergy is absorbed less with personal morality and more with public matters: nuclear strategy, economics, the big picture. From Catholic pulpits there are ever fewer homilies about prayer and personal salvation and more and more tirades on matters of public policy, i.e., matters influenced by what the priests are wont to call "social justice," a perfumed phrase that they use ever more promiscuously to anesthetize their opposition.

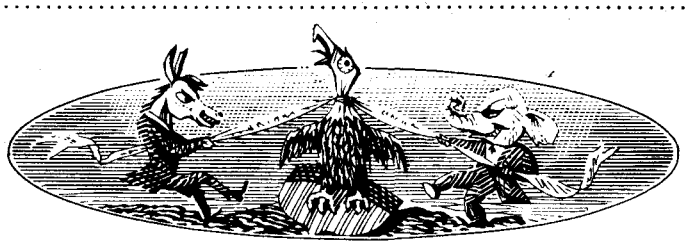
What all this means to Americans, Michael Novak, one of the editors of *Catholicism in Crisis,* tells us in his splendid new book, *Confession of a Catholic,** is that some among the Catholic "clerocracy" are now coming, albeit late, to the same left-wing enthusiasms that are increasingly considered so dubious by the American majority, while leaving most laymen befuddled and uneasy. Anti-papists, kick up your heels; the Church of Rome in America is about to go the way of the Shakers. It is loosening its hold on men's souls and heading along the same glorious path into oblivion once trod by the Hon. George McGovern.

The evidence goes far beyond my lone sighting of a priest in a pink suit. In Michigan, Sister Agnes Mary Mansour heaves aside her vows and leaves her order rather than give up the directorship of the state's Department of Social Services, an agency administering Medicaid payments for some 12,000 abortions yearly, all murders in the eyes of the Church. In San Francisco Archbishop John R. Quinn becomes so tumescent over the pastoral letter on nuclear arms that he announces that Catholics in the military should refuse any order to detonate a nuclear bomb or warhead. In Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen attempts to intimidate parishioners into withholding half their federal income taxes to protest military spending. In Indianapolis Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara, in a fever to place New Age clerics sharing his views on nuclear arms and other trendy enthusiasms into influential parishes, makes himself the center of public scandal by casting aside respected pastors, refusing to answer inquiries from the media or from concerned citizens—Catholics and non-Catholics alike—and becoming publicly accused of deceitfulness and contempt for the spirit of dialogue and consultation with the laity that issued from Vatican II.

These last three instances have their counterparts all over the Republic. They are vivid examples of what the editors of *Catholicism in Crisis* call clericalism. The New Age Catholic Church is acting just as imperiously as its predecessor of thirty years ago, but now it is hamfistedly reaching into the realm that an earlier Christian once defined as Caesar's. Surely the late Jesus of Galilee knew what he was about when he made that distinction. □

*Harper & Row, $12.95.

CAPITOL IDEAS



THE MORALITY CHARADE

by Tom Bethell

The disproportionate attention given to the Reagan Administration's acquisition of Jimmy Carter's 1980 debate papers has shown us once again American institutions under attack, with Sir Galahad of Media wielding a pen more righteous than the sword, and wielding it (as future historians will note with puzzlement) *against* his own side. Such treachery now routinely comes under cover of principle: a high-minded insistence that American institutions must be judged only by the highest standards. One would have no cause for complaint about the stringency of such guidelines if they were applied uniformly. But they are not. They are applied selectively. Everything depends on whether the institution in question enjoys Media approval. The presidency does not.

"Debategate" is only the latest such morality charade, bringing on stage such hypocritical if minor players as the *Los Angeles Times*'s Jack Nelson, backstage adviser to the Carter Camp in the late 1970s, calling George Will "outrageous" for playing backstage adviser to the Reagan Camp in the early 1980s. Jimmy Breslin is another who rather incongruously looked down a moral lorgnette at Will. I wonder how long it will take for our media hypocrites to realize that they have been overdoing their displays of selective indignation of late, and soon may completely exhaust their already depleted fund of good will.

The contrast between the hot condemnation of Will (a kind of transposed envy on the part of some of his critics, I suspect) and the cool *political* appraisal of Representatives Studds and Crane, publicly chastised for consorting sexually with teenage pages in their charge, could not have been more striking. The columnist Mary McGrory, who rises to the most tremendous heights of moral outrage whenever she scents an opportunity to advance her perennial cause, socialism, could only say of the pair's ignominious censure: "Humbling they may need, but humiliation is not popular." (Translation: "Let's not get carried away or do anything to roll back the sexual revolution.") Notice how well these selective displays of outrage comport with the "media elite attitudes on social issues" shown in the 1981 Lichter/Rothman poll: 97 percent agreed with the statement that "government should not regulate sex." Meanwhile fully 49 percent of the media-elite agreed with the Marxist proposition that "the structure of society causes alienation."

In a recent meeting of the Committee for the Free World, Irving Kristol said that contemporary journalism "reflects a state of mind that is egalitarian and antinomian. It regards its job as the destruction of all authorities and all institutions, and to the degree that it can destroy an institution, it thinks it is doing good." If journalists showed themselves to be completely indiscriminate in their attacks on American institutions, I would agree with this. But they don't. There is a pattern of attack, even though the journalists themselves may not be aware of the pattern they create. Try to imagine, if you doubt me, a "CBS Evening News" segment pointing out that welfare workers lobby to expand the programs they administrate. Or visualize a three-part series in the *New York Times* examining the accommodationist culture of the State Department. Are you ready for this one? A *Washington Post* series on the very extensive government funding of leftist organizations in recent years, complete with outraged quotations from Howard Phillips! When you consider such incongruities you begin to realize that the press is in league with some institutions—in opposition to others.

One way to understand this is to bear in mind that the Bipartisan Consensus, or the Moderate Coalition (as Joe Kraft calls the Ruling Class), can't abide elections. Oh, I know media folk love to write about horse races, because they are easy to grasp. But at a deeper level there is in Washington a profound resentment of the fact that we do have to hold these damnable elections every few years. By "Washington" I mean a loose association of civil servants, senior legislators, elder statesmen, public interest lawyers, congressional

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aides, Judiciary and retinue, and their media allies who give them all the free p.r. they need and who in fact constitute a communication system between the various parts of the Coalition. (Kristol himself some years ago called this same entity, or something very much like it, the New Class.)

Elections may be fun to write about, but their drawback is that they so unpredictably introduce outsiders into the machinery of government—and at very high levels! Moreover these newcomers usually have "simplistic" ideas about reducing government, even though they lack real experience in governing. Elections, then, considerably complicate the task of ruling.

The Moderate Coalition's response has been to make life as difficult as possible for the White House incumbent, whomever he may be. In this enterprise media and bureaucracy are allies, regarding each other as old friends with permanent-resident status, united in their distaste for all hacks and political neophytes, whether they be from "the sticks," like Carter, or from the social stratum labeled "nouveau riche," like Ron and Nancy.

Carter showed that he was eager to please the Powers That Be the minute he arrived, rolling over like a puppy and declaring that he liked classical music, read Reinhold Niebuhr, and all in all was a good liberal with a kiss on the cheek for Brezhnev. But it didn't do him any good. For the most part, the Galahad Gang instinctively wished to propel him back to the sticks whence he had so implausibly emerged, just as they instinctively would like to be rid of Reagan today. (By 1980 Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times* and one or two other alert leftists demurred, knowing that they had in Carter an ideally pliant incumbent. Such politically astute ideologues will logically tend to support John Glenn in 1984.)

Another point to notice about the Moderate Coalition is that it is a small minority, perennially touting such unpopular policies as tax increases and bank bailouts. The democratic election of policymakers poses an obvious threat to such policies. This explains the Moderate Coalition's constant resort to verbal camouflage, and its infatuation with polling—the up-to-date method of persuading the public that policy is merely a response to the popular will.

The other day I came across a beautiful example of this. Steven Weisman wrote in the *New York Times* that the new "bipartisan commission" on Central America that Reagan had so lamely appointed (rolling over, just like Jimmy) "was needed to rescue his military policies in the region from rejection by the Congress and the public." The headline read: "Panel to the Rescue. New Team on Central America Was Needed to Save U.S. Policy from Public Rejection."

"Public." I mean, what a shameless lie! Three weeks earlier the *New York Times* itself had convincingly shown that the public has not the slightest idea what is going on in Central America. This came out in a most unusual poll which actually violated the First Unwritten Rule of Polling: never disclose the ignorance of the people whose "opinion" you are manufacturing in the guise of "sampling." This the NYT/CBS poll did by asking people for specific information: whose side are we on in Nicaragua and El Salvador? The government side or the insurgent side? Twenty-five percent knew our position on El Salvador, 13 percent on Nicaragua, while only 8 percent got both alignments right. Nevertheless, Weisman still had the effrontery to say that "the public" was rejecting

THE FIRST AMENDMENT v. UNION POLITICAL SPENDING

The First Amendment was written nearly 200 years ago to protect the right of all Americans to freely express their own opinions—and the right not to support opinions with which they disagree.

But despite the First Amendment, one group in America has the power to force men and women to financially support political causes and candidates they oppose—or lose their jobs. That group is organized labor.

Federal labor law as well as some state laws permit unions and employers to require working Americans to pay union dues as a condition of employment, regardless of whether or not they want to join or support a union. As a result, the AFL-CIO and member unions collect more than $3.5 billion per year—$10 million a day—in compulsory dues.

This massive amount of union treasury money, often called "soft money," cannot be used for direct cash contributions to candidates for federal office. But federal election law permits the use of "soft money" for a host of union activities for candidates, political parties, referendums and ideological causes.

And spend it the unions do. Political historian Theodore White called the AFL-CIO political effort in 1968 "unprecedented in American history." It included, for example, the registration of 4.6 million voters, the printing and distribution of 115 million pamphlets and leaflets, telephone banks in 638 localities, 72,225 house-to-house canvassers, and nearly 100,000 volunteers on election day.

Labor columnist Victor Riesel estimates that the cost of organized labor's unreported "in-kind" political activities in 1976 was over $100 million. Allowing for inflation and the dramatic increase in union political action, that figure could top $150 million in 1984.

In response, more and more union members are speaking out against the flagrant abuse of their First Amendment rights, looking to the nation's courts for help.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the use of compulsory union dues for political, ideological and other non-collective bargaining activities is unconstitutional, violating employees' First Amendment rights. But some courts have strayed badly in their interpretation of the legal precedents.

This fall, the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation will seek from the Supreme Court a strict definition of collective bargaining and a uniform remedy to protect the constitutional rights of American workers against the use of their compulsory dues for union political spending. **(Ellis/Fails v. Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks)**

The issue is clear, the abuse widespread. Rank and file workers, especially those who choose not to become union members, have little or no say as to which candidates and causes their money is used to support.

As a federal appeals court has stated, this wholesale violation of employees' First Amendment rights damages workers twice: They are forced to "contribute" to political candidates they oppose, and their ability to finance candidates they do support is thereby severely diminished.

Nearly 200 years ago, Thomas Jefferson wrote: "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical."

Unhappily, such tyranny prevails in America today in the form of union political spending financed by compulsory union dues. This tyranny can only be eliminated by the combined action of an informed press, an aroused citizenry and a responsible judiciary.

If you would like further information about this fundamental abuse of the First Amendment, please write us for a copy of our pamphlet, "The First Amendment vs. Union Political Spending: A 26-Year Legal Battle for Employees' Political Freedom", and more information about the landmark case, **Ellis/Fails v. BRAC.** Or call Joanna Boyce at (703) 321-8510.

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our "military policies," hence the Commission.

In this light, then, let us look briefly at the mountainous molehill of Jimmy Carter's debate papers, which somehow leaked to Reagan's staff. Elsewhere, I gather, Fred Barnes says that the press would have seized the same opportunity, whoever was President. Of course I agree. And, by the way, if by some misfortune Teddy Kennedy were President, he too would soon come under intense media fire: the press corps would want the world (and Teddy) to know who was boss. Senior media figures in Washington now undoubtedly think of themselves as constituting a Court, rather a dour Court perhaps, not a glittery one like Jack Kennedy's, but still a Moral Court, and, if the truth be told, a Classy Court. That's why they were so vexed with George Will—rushing off so shamelessly to the old, demoted Court . . .

But just because the press is approximately nonpartisan in its antagonism to the White House, it does not follow that it is aimless, or that it impartially presents us every day with a random mass of data. Broadly speaking the press is purposeful, and this purpose can be deduced from the underlying philosophy (ideology) which determines what is to be regarded as news and what is not. Moreover, media behavior follows an unmistakable pattern—a pattern which cannot be denied simply because most journalists are not aware that they contribute to it. It would be beyond the scope of this article to describe the pattern itself, but as Joe Sobran has pointed out an entity behaving purposefully in ways not consciously recognized by the individuals that constitute it is best described by analogy with collective "organisms" found in nature.

The modus operandi of the media is every bit as interesting as their motive. How did the story evolve from the point where Laurence Barrett could not get his own scoop into *Time* (1981), to the point where Leslie Stahl could lead CBS News with the non-item that President Reagan was "perceived as being increasingly isolated"? (He had gone to his ranch for the July 4 holiday, as I recall.)

The columnist Jack Anderson answered this question in a lucid paragraph that deserves to be carved in stone: "The uncovering of a political scandal requires a great cooperative act of perception. If the press at large ignores the fledgling exposé, if the editors fail to grasp its importance, if reporters do not widen the beachhead, if press conferences do not confront public officials over it, if columnists do not elaborate its ramifications, then it will not survive to reach those levels where public advocates take it up, where investigative agencies begin to grind, where mass opinion demands redress." I only wish Anderson had added that the same "cooperative act" can, for a time at least, turn a non-scandal into an illusory one. (I also wish the *Washington Post* hadn't cut this paragraph from its version of Anderson's column.)

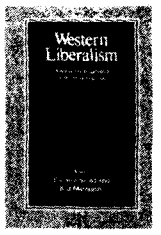
The media's great conceit is that their activities are comparable to a floodlight, bathing the political arena in an all-encompassing, salubrious glow, leaving no dark corners in which lawbreakers can toil undetected. It would be more accurate to say that the media collectively operate a searchlight, and where one spotlight falls, others will slavishly follow. And who, in mid-July, was caught in the beam, unexpectedly skipping in dishabille across the stage? None other than James Baker, the White House press corps' all-time favorite chief of staff, click. Someone switched off the searchlight at that point. Perhaps it wasn't a story after all. □

SIZZLING EXCERPTS FROM PAINE, LOCKE, SPENCER, ADAM SMITH, LORD ACTON, AND de TOCQUEVILLE

GIANTS WHO BLAZED THE TRAIL OF LIBERTY

WESTERN LIBERALISM:
A History in Documents
Edited by E.K. Bramsted and K.J. Melhuish
Reviewed by Roy A. Childs, Jr.

Western Liberalism is a history of the defense of liberty, and it has something for everyone: a lengthy introduction setting these classic thinkers and their ideas in the context of their times, as well as a selection of more than 120 excerpts from their greatest works. Major treatises, historic documents, passionate speeches and blazing pamphlets are all represented here in abundance, many translated for the first time. In more than 800 pages, there is a sweeping overview of the triumph and decline of classical liberalism.



And most of the excerpts sizzle. There are choice selections, most several pages long, from the best minds of the past. Here are Locke's and Voltaire's passionate defense of religious toleration; Adam Smith's eloquent defense of "the simple system of natural liberty; von Humboldt's moving portrayal of the free development of the unique individual personality; Tom Paine's pugnacious defense of the Rights of Man; Condorcet's visionary discourse on human progress; Ricardo's explanation of the law of comparative advantage; Bastiat's witty brief for free trade and competition; Benjamin Constant's inspiring plea to recognize the glory of individual liberty; Mme. de Stael's dramatic denunciation of the adversaries of freedom; Richard Cobden's blistering attack on protectionism; Bright's spirited championing of a non-interventionist foreign policy; John Stuart Mill's fervent defense of human diversity; Mazzini's argument that individual liberty is in fact the precondition of morality. Acton, Spencer and de Tocqueville are all here among the more than 70 people represented. So too are those who took liberalism down the wrong path: figures like T.H. Green, Leonard Hobhouse and John Maynard Keynes.

"This is a truly riveting collection, the best ever assembled in one volume."

But all of this only scratches the surface. *Western Liberalism* can be studied carefully, providing a broad overview of a vitally important aspect of intellectual history, from Locke to Hayek. But it can also be browsed through to gather up rhetorical gems —passionate phrases by the partisans of freedom. Two samples will show you what I mean.

Bentham: "There are properly no other criminals than the heads of nations: the subjects are always honest."

Tom Paine: "He who would make his own liberty secure, must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty, he establishes a precedent that will rech to himself."

The tendency to go on quoting is nearly irresistible.

Western Liberalism is a libertarian *Roots*, a guide to the best of our forebears, each one provided with a biographical sketch. Some are libertarian household names; others deserve to be. Giants who blazed the trail of liberty are here, as are those whose twisted version of liberalism led down the path to disaster.

This is a truly riveting collection, the best ever assembled in one volume. It is an exotic libertarian feast: you can nibble at will, or swallow it whole. In either case, it belongs on a shelf with the classics, to be taken down whenever you are hungry for a sense of passionate dedication to the cause of individual liberty, and everything that it makes possible in life. Here are the freedom fighters upon whose shoulders we all stand. *Western Liberalism* is both a challenge and a delight. Don't miss it.

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Roy A. Childs, Jr., a foreign policy analyst for the Cato Institute, has written extensively on classical liberalism.

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Richard Grenier

THE PASSION OF SEYMOUR HERSH

Burned by the ardors of ideology.

Seymour Hersh has come to us from the sun, pure in heart and mind, a seeker after Truth, the sacred, the indivisible. At least that's what he tells us when he presents *The Price of Power,** his new book on Henry Kissinger.

Of course, Hersh is a human being, and like the rest of us, he has human desires. "I'd really love to get that son-of-a-bitch," he said of Kissinger in 1973, according to Harrison Salisbury. David Halberstam writes of Hersh that, "pleasure of pleasures," "nothing would have pleased him more" than laying General Lavelle's "unauthorized" bombing of North Vietnam at Kissinger's door. Former Ambassador to Chile Edward Korry writes that Hersh offered to rehabilitate him in a front-page story in the *New York Times* if Korry would help him "get" Kissinger. "He screamed abuse at me . . . taunted me, threatening to inflict damage if I did not help him to 'get' Kissinger," says Korry.

The Freedom of Information Act has a quaint side effect. Not only are government documents released to inquiring reporters, but letters from reporters requesting such documents are *also* released, which Hersh did not realize, and his letters of request—written before he had begun his investigation—reveal an anterior, intensely hostile view of Kissinger, plus a prior intention of showing "that lying on a wholesale scale went on in the White House." "If you want malice, you've got malice," Hersh admitted to Scott H. Lang of Arnold and Porter. "I'll give you malice."

Human beings naturally also have their ideological preferences. Hersh, who was Eugene McCarthy's press secretary during the "Children's Crusade" of 1968, complained to Ralph de Toledano that Senator McCarthy was no better than a puppet of the Establishment and that he had no understanding or sympathy for the "revolution." This would seem to imply that Hersh is some sort of revolutionary, working to bring about some new form of society, the shape of which we can only guess.

But it is as a seeker after truth that we must judge Seymour Hersh. Now the truths that Hersh has shown such fierce diligence in revealing—the My Lai massacre, the "secret bombing" of Cambodia, domestic spying by the CIA—have without exception been to the discredit of the government, or armed forces, or intelligence services of the United States. But perhaps, if one is sufficiently dedicated in his pursuit of truth, it is "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!" and "You may fire when you are ready, Gridley!" The truth must out.

So it is with breathless interest that one reads the series of dispatches that Hersh wrote for the *New York Times* from (or immediately upon returning from) Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in August 1979. One is astonished to find Hersh—so permeated with the conviction of "lying on a wholesale scale" in the U.S. government—sitting at the feet of Nguyen Co Thach, then Vietnam's Acting Foreign Minister, repeating his words without the faintest hint of skepticism. Apparently there is no wholesale lying in the government of Vietnam. There doesn't even seem to be retail lying.

At the time of Hersh's visit to Vietnam, the world press—including his own newspaper—was filled with stories of the Vietnamese "Boat People," the Vietnam "Gulag," and a regime revealing itself to be far more repressive than that of the former South Vietnam. Its evils were denounced, in the *Times,* even by Father Robert Drinan and Elizabeth Holzman. The preceding month there had been an emergency international conference on Boat People. Their agonies had been shown on the world's television screens.

But, strangely, Hersh investigates none of this. He finds in Hanoi a "happy" people, "serene and optimistic" leaders. He respectfully quotes the Acting Foreign Minister as saying, "There is no gap in Vietnam between the life of the people and the life of the officials." Hersh says the Vietnamese people are already acquiring "Western values," and assures us on his own authority that aid from the USSR "would never turn Vietnam into a Soviet satellite."

Ho Chi Minh City, Hersh grants, as opposed to Hanoi, "is not a happy place." But he mentions no cause for this other than the war or the United States, noticing no intrinsic faults in the regime. He uncritically quotes the Acting Foreign Minister as saying the fleeing refugees "have guilty consciences . . . they were used to the easy life under American aid. They cannot work hard. . . ."

In Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, Hersh finds an "independent," "non-Communist" newspaper. He finds a former South Vietnamese Army doctor who positively enjoyed his thirty months in a "re-education camp" (read: Gulag), describing the manual labor he did there as sheer "pleasure."

He portrays some occupants of New Economic Zones (called "concentration camps" by Father Drinan) as "reasonably content," warning that the foreigner's concern with being propagandized in a country like Vietnam is "sometimes . . . misplaced." Apparently this is because, judging from Hersh's account, every-

*Summit Books, $19.95.

Richard Grenier is a member of the Council of Foreign Relations. His novel The Marrakesh One-Two *has just been nominated for the Book Critics Circle Award.*

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one in Vietnam—even when speaking through a government interpreter—always tells the truth.

This conflicts with my own experience in many long hours of conversation with North Vietnamese delegates during the Vietnam Peace Talks, where it seemed to me they lied even as other men, if not more so. But Hersh seems to trust his Hanoi sources completely, since he uses them to reconstruct the "real" story of what went on at the Paris Peace Talks in his new book on Henry Kissinger.

Hersh uses other sources for his book, of course. He uses John Mitchell, who has qualified various statements attributed to him as "grossly exaggerated," "gross falsifications," and, on a key point, "a goddamn lie." He uses Richard Allen, who was dismissed by Kissinger and notoriously bears him little love. His major source for events in Chile is former U.S. Ambassador to Chile Edward Korry. But Korry says the material was, first, "extorted" from him, and second, twisted beyond recognition. He says that Hersh is a "consistent liar," that he is guilty of "deliberate, sustained malice and dishonesty," and that he has "dealt journalism a blow quite analogous to the one Mr. Nixon dealt the presidency with Watergate."

"If you want malice, you've got malice," Hersh admitted to Scott H. Lang of Arnold and Porter. "I'll give you malice."

But most fascinating of all are Hersh's *unidentified* sources, for whose testimony we are asked to take his unsupported word. What are their biases? Has Hersh twisted their statements? Do the sources exist?

Here Hersh walked straight into an ambush set for him by Ted Koppel on ABC's "Nightline." Koppel said to Hersh: "Some of the people with whom I spoke—and here too I'm afraid they want to remain unidentified—said that they received letters from you saying, in effect, 'Give me the dirt on Henry.'"

Embarrassed, Hersh answered: "What am I supposed to say? 'Some of the people with whom I spoke' . . . I mean, you know . . . Give me a break." To which Koppel replied smartly, "It's kind of tough, isn't it? . . . It's tough to respond to unidentified sources."

Hersh has written a 699-page book of surpassing tediousness. It is totally unreliable, and inspired by such an ungovernable hatred that—Hersh's remarks in interviews to the contrary—there is not a single favorable sentence in it about Kissinger. It doubtless contains some true statements, some false statements, and—according to some of Hersh's own sources—some shameless lies. To sort these out is almost impossible. Hersh's prose is leaden, the text is informed by no sense of foreign policy, it has all the soaring quality of a lawyer's brief, and I would not find it unreasonable to demand $200 an hour to read it.

Simon and Schuster has prepared a six-page summary of the book's principal "revelations"—which, prorated, might be worth 17 cents if placed on sale separately. They include (with all the coherence that the following list conveys): a charge of extensive Kissinger double-dealing between the Nixon and Humphrey camps during the early stages of the Vietnam Peace Talks (this on the basis of a 36-hour Kissinger visit to Paris in September 1968); a charge that Kissinger ordered a secret 29-day alert at Def Con 1 in October 1969 (which from my own military experience I would deem quite impossible); a charge that Kissinger and aide Lawrence Eagleburger mocked Richard Nixon for kneeling and praying on the eve of his resignation (which General Brent Scowcroft, who says he was the only other person present when Kissinger and Eagleburger allegedly did the mocking, has angrily denied in print); a charge that the CIA acted in Chile, not in the interests of national security, but to protect big business (disavowed by a major source, Edward Korry); a charge that Kissinger drove India into the arms of the Soviet Union (the Soviet-Indian Friendship Treaty had actually been in the works for two years); and a charge that Kissinger allowed himself to be outmaneuvered by the Soviet Union during SALT I (Hersh, incongruously, attacking now from the right).

That some of the principal personages of Hersh's book should deny his allegations flatly is not particularly surprising—although many readers would take their word at least as readily as that of Hersh. Even such a publication as the *Village Voice*—with separate pictures of Hersh and Kissinger side by side on the front page—headlined its "splash" article on the book: *WHOM DO YOU TRUST?* Kissinger has called the charge of double-dealing during the Vietnam Peace Talks "a slimy lie," adding that what he had read of the book "is untrue, is distorted, or used totally interested witnesses, many of whom were dismissed after a year of serving on my staff." Former Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai has called "a sheer mad story" the accusation that he was once a paid agent of the CIA—a charge attributed to one of Hersh's superbly unidentified sources. Desai has brought a $5 million libel suit against Hersh and secured a temporary injunction against distribution of the book in India. (Hersh feels it was highly deceitful of Richard Nixon and Kissinger to use alleged intelligence from Desai because of Desai's "well-known hostility" to Indira Gandhi—an attitude not without irony since Hersh makes lavish use of just such hostile informants himself.)

But far more damaging to Hersh's case is disavowal by his own sources, such as Ambassador Korry, or the extremely numerous cases where his scatter-shot accusations or labored constructs do not square with rudimentary common sense. General Scowcroft, for example, explained, "I don't think we've ever been to Def Con 1, which means imminent attack." In his lust to report everything he could possibly scrounge that would reflect discredit on Kissinger, Hersh does not seem to have grasped the rather elementary fact that at Def Con 1, with the U.S. armed forces at full war alert, all military leaves are canceled immediately—a fact which would be quite impossible to keep secret for 29 days. Hersh is also an assiduous employer of innuendo. Like William Shawcross before him—whom, in his egocentric way, Hersh barely acknowledges—he attempts to link Kissinger to the 1970 overthrow of Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia. He quotes some U.S. military sources to the effect that such a plan was given consideration at a low echelon, but offers no evidence whatever that the coup was approved by either Kissinger or Richard Nixon. This does not stop him from hinting darkly (still with no proof) that "at least some senior officials in the American government were actively encouraging the overthrow of Sihanouk." As happens again and again in his book, Hersh does not, in short, make his case.

The book's two chapters on Chile (of especial relevance now that Kissinger has been appointed to head the new bipartisan Presidential Commission on Communist Penetration of Latin America) can serve as an example of Hersh's method. Now the CIA's Cord Meyer—whose judgment Hersh must respect since he quotes him deferentially at a key point—has given us an excellent, succinct picture of pre-Allende Chile in his remarkable recent memoir, *Facing Reality*,† the very same work from which Hersh quotes. Meyer's picture is large and comprehensive, and includes a description of Chile's Socialist Party, which (a widely misunderstood fact) was nothing like the Social Democratic parties of Western Europe. Heavily influenced by Leninist ideology from its inception in 1933, when Allende joined it as a

†University Press of America, $15.95.

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young Trotskyite, "it was consistently a Marxist revolutionary party committed to the destruction of the bourgeois order," writes Meyer. It contained, moreover, a radical faction which was far to the left of the Communists and favored extreme revolutionary violence as the only means to achieve power. One can judge the strength of this faction from the fact that its leader, Carlos Altamirano, was elected the Socialist Party's Secretary General after Allende's ascension to the presidency. At no point, writes Meyer, was majority control within Chile's Socialist ranks exercised by genuine Social Democrats who believed in gradual reform within a multiparty system.

Once in office, Allende justified the worst fears of his adversaries. He conducted vast extra-legal expropriations and requisitions, attempted to silence the opposition press and radio. In August 1973, three weeks before the Pinochet coup, the Chilean Chamber of Deputies passed by a vote of 81 to 47 a resolution declaring: "The present [Allende] government, from the beginning, has attempted to seize total power, [and to install] a totalitarian order absolutely opposed to the system of representative democracy prescribed by the constitution." Allende's totalitarian sympathies, furthermore, were evident long before he came to power. He was an active member of many Communist-front organizations and was serving as Vice-President of the World Peace Council when he visited Stalinist Russia in 1954 during the premiership of Georgi Malenkov, now an Orwellian "nonperson" (no longer listed in the Soviet Encyclopedia). Once Castro took power, Chile's "Socialists" sent many young militants to Cuba for indoctrination, and Allende led the Chilean delegation to the 1966 Tricontinental Conference in Havana. In office, Allende welcomed an influx of Cuban intelligence officers, one of whom married his daughter. During his 1970 election campaign, although Allende promised to preserve democratic pluralism (of which promise, more later), the candidate declared: "Cuba in the Caribbean and a Socialist Chile in the Southern Cone will make the Revolution in Latin America."

Swimming as one does through seas of unnamed sources in Hersh's book, it is positively delightful—and for a crucial opinion—to come across a real name like Cord Meyer. And it is even more delightful when this real name has written a book, and one can read the full testimony oneself, and not just the few words Hersh has tweezered out of it.

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For, bizarre as it is to recount, Hersh's Allende and Chile have virtually nothing in common with the Allende and Chile described by Cord Meyer. In pre-Allende Chile, in Hersh's version, there are no Marxist revolutionaries dedicated to overthrowing the bourgeois order. There are no trips to Stalinist Moscow or Castro's Havana. There is no Tricontinental Conference, no KGB or DGI. (It tells you a good deal about Hersh's book to note that, while references to the CIA are numerous as the stars in the heavens, there is not a single mention in the entire book of the DGI—Cuba's highly effective intelligence service—or the KGB.) Pre-Allende Chile, according to Hersh, is a devil's playground of greedy "American multinational corporations" with their relentless "profit taking." "There is compelling evidence," Hersh writes, "that Nixon's tough stance against Allende in 1970 was principally shaped by his concern for the future of the American corporations. . . ."

But Kissinger's opposition to Allende, writes Hersh, was of a completely different order: it was *ideological* (as well it might have been). Hersh cites a frequently quoted remark made by Kissinger as Chile's 1970 election approached: "I have yet to meet somebody who firmly believes that if Allende wins there is likely to be another free election in Chile." But he follows this with the confident assertion that Kissinger's "real fear, of course, was precisely the opposite: that Allende would work within the democratic process." His authority for this is a National Security Council aide—unnamed, naturally. Hersh considers Kissinger's statement that an Allende victory would end democracy in Chile so hypocritical that he comes back to it again eight pages later, this time calling it "ludicrous" in view, partly, of Allende's "graceful acceptance of defeat in the 1958 and 1964 elections." One would think a six-year-old could explain to Hersh that it is one thing to accept defeat "gracefully" when one is the beaten challenger, opposed by the police, military, and the constitutional order of the state, and quite another to *surrender* power gracefully when one already controls the police and military, the constitutional order having perhaps been subverted.

Since Hersh is such a demon investigator, one would also think he might have investigated his way to the shelves of any public library, where he would have found *The Chilean Revolution: Conversations with Allende* by Régis Debray, the world's premier Guevara groupie and France's gift to lyrical Latin American Revolutionism. To Régis, who addressed him throughout as "Comrade President," Allende confessed that all his campaign promises to preserve democratic pluralism were merely a "tactical necessity." "At the time," said Allende, "the important thing was to take control of the government." And this was not the only time he made such remarks. To Georgie Anne Geyer, now a columnist of the United Press Syndicate, who asked Allende if he intended to set up a one-party state, he answered: "Not right away. It will take a while." In a later interview, when she asked him if, following the elections of 1970, under his presidency, there would ever be elections again in Chile, he was even more forthright. By the time his six-year presidential term was over, Allende said, "You must understand . . . everything will have changed . . . there will be a change of regime and of system." Now if words mean anything, this meant that—if Allende had his way—before his term in office was over all this fine democratic pluralism was going to go and Chile would have a new "regime" and a new "system," a "one-party state," and would have embarked on a journey to a land from which no voyager has ever returned: monolithic Marxism-Leninism, which the ancients once called Communism.

But it is Hersh's seeming unfamiliarity with Régis Debray's *Conversations with Allende,* an elementary work tool for any student of the Allende period, that is most piquant. American government officials lie wholesale? Perhaps American journalists as well? So be it. Citizens of the People's Republic of Vietnam are uniformly truthful? So be it, also. But surely Régis Debray, a Westerner but an ideological kinsman of Hersh, can be trusted to tell the truth? . . . Not, apparently, when what he has to say conflicts with Hersh's thesis. When evidence, testimonial or circumstantial, does not support Hersh's objective it goes straight into the ashcan. We are dealing here with the Hersh School of Adversary Historiography, a monument, I would suggest, to the historical period—and to the press—which spewed him forth.

On September 4, 1970, Hersh tells us, Salvador Allende Gossens "won" the Chilean presidential election. Hersh gives figures but he is tricky. He somehow neglects to mention that Allende's plurality was 36 percent, only one percentage point ahead of his conservative opponent—a small detail but interesting. He does not tell us that Allende's vote had dropped sharply from the total he received in the previous election six years before, or that his plurality in the three-cornered election was due to the rightward displacement of the

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electorate, weakening the centrist Christian Democrats, who had won an absolute majority last time out. He does not tell us that Allende received the full support of Chile's Communist Party, or that the Soviet Union and Cuba were secretly subsidizing his campaign (indeed how could he, since for Hersh the KGB and the DGI seem not to exist). He does not tell us that the CIA turned down funds from ITT because the corporation wished the Agency to channel them to Chile's conservatives, whereas the Agency had a hands-off policy, refusing to choose between Allende's two opponents. It supported neither, directing its efforts in a general way solely against what it felt was a Communist-dominated coalition. All this material was reported routinely in the press, some of it from the findings of the Church Committee, but is not mentioned by Hersh, presumably because it conflicts with his Marxoid view of American policy as the servile instrument of ravenous capitalist exploiters.

Hersh does not tell us, lastly, that the *anti*-Allende tally in the first round of this famous Chilean election was 64 percent, almost two-thirds—split, admittedly, between conservatives and centrists, but with conservatives dominant. Hersh knows this, since it was all in the daily newspapers, once upon a time, yet he omits it. Why clutter a good narrative?

According to the Chilean constitution, if a presidential candidate did not win an absolute majority in the first round of the election, the run-off between the two top candidates was decided by a joint session of both houses of Chile's Congress some two months later. The Chilean tradition, which in hindsight seems stunningly imprudent, was to elect in a gentlemanly manner the winner of the plurality in the first round. But Richard Nixon, unwilling to rely on the long-term strength of Chilean constitutional democracy to withstand the threat of a six-year Allende presidency, ordered an all-out effort to block Allende's election, if necessary by military coup d'état. (According to the Church Committee, this all-out effort ran into the stone-wall of Chile's constitutionality, the military refusing to cooperate.) Here Hersh turns deferentially to Cord Meyer. Given the shortness of the time available, and the strong constitutional tradition of the Chilean military, Meyer writes that he did not consider a military coup feasible, and placing his faith in Chile's constitutional democracy, he considered Nixon's decision "aberrational and hysterical." This, of course, is just a matter of judgment, but Hersh finds Meyer's judgment wise and sound.

How odd it is then, when three pages later Meyer writes that after Nixon's last-minute effort against an Allende victory "the President returned to a much more rational course in his dealings with the consequences of an Allende regime," that Hersh should find his judgment so atrocious that he chooses to ignore the statement, preferring to portray Nixon as going from wickedness to wickedness. In his very next sentence, Meyer affirms:

> From that time forward no further attempt was made by Nixon to involve the Agency in any effort to encourage a military coup. In fact, the record shows that from the time of Allende's election, the Agency was specifically enjoined from any action that might be construed as supporting coup plotting, and these orders were carried out. When the Chilean officers finally moved to overthrow Allende in September 1973, they did so on their own initiative and for their own reasons and without consultation or coordination with either the U.S. Embassy or the CIA station in Santiago. . . . the evidence is conclusive that Allende's final downfall was strictly a Chilean affair in which the Agency played no part. . . .

Poor Cord Meyer. So sane and wise on page 184, so lunatic or deceitful on page 187 that his well-wisher must pass over his words in silence.

Hersh's treatment of the report of the Senate Intelligence Committee is similarly selective. When the report has something negative to say he embraces it fervently. But when it exonerates the CIA he is instantly filled with dark suspicion. The Committee found no evidence—in the words of the report—that "assassination was ever proposed as a method of carrying out the Presidential order to prevent Allende from assuming office." But you don't stop Seymour Hersh that easily. He bravely announces:

> No document will ever be found, nor will there be an eyewitness, to describe the CIA plans or White House directions to murder Salvador Allende. In interviews, nearly everybody involved, including the false-flaggers [deep-cover agents], has denied knowledge of any such planning.

But where there's a will there's a way. Hersh produces a small collection of sources, all but one of them unidentified, who "heard talk," "figured" because of such-and-so that something must be afoot (the one named source), "confirmed" that contingency plans to assassinate Allende existed. Writes Hersh:

> Sloman [a pseudonym] insists that the Chileans were always told not to get involved in bloodshed: "Our answer to them was no—by no means." Yet, he said, "There is no way you can stop a Chilean from doing anything."

This is as close as Hersh ever gets to making his case.

We are dealing here with the Hersh School of Adversary Historiography, a monument, I would suggest, to the historical period—and to the press—which spewed him forth.

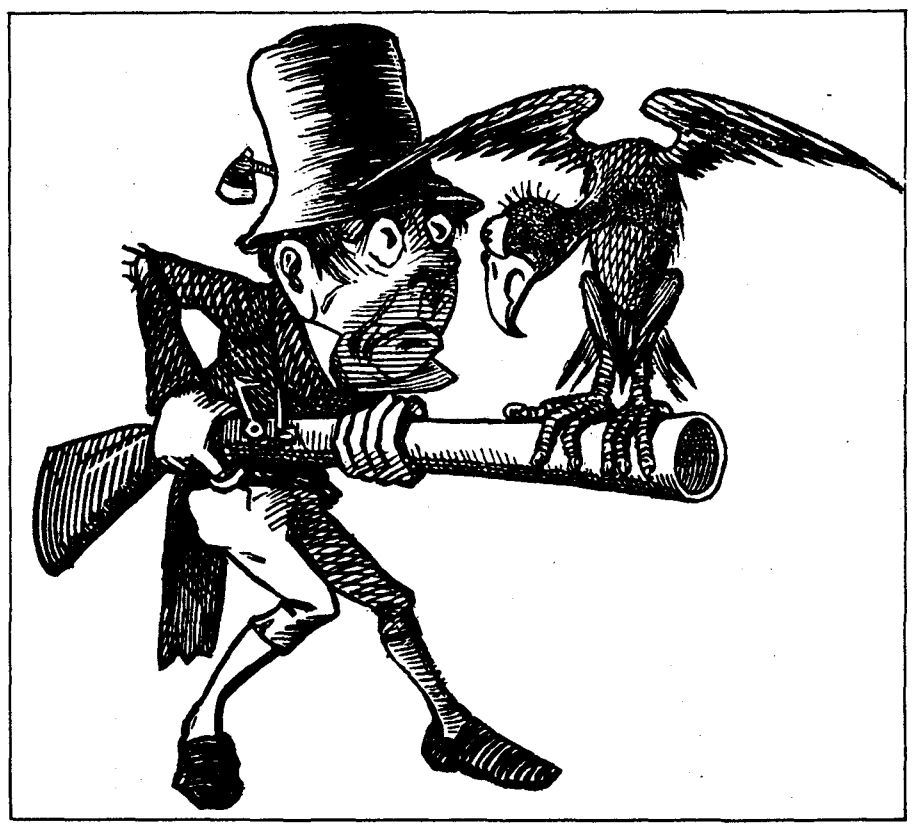
So, on Chile, what does this book leave us with? A benign, democratic Allende on his way to achieving a Chilean paradise if it had not been for the evil machinations of Henry Kissinger. A picture of Richard Nixon and his ravenous capitalist exploiters copied out of a hoary Marxist primer. A Henry Kissinger so diabolical that he claimed he had fears for Chilean democracy while secretly fearing just the opposite: *that social democracy would bloom in Chile.* A heart-rending plea ("in the eyes of many critics") for the abolition of the CIA's authority to conduct covert operations, leaving the United States unilaterally disarmed in its struggle against—why, in its struggle against nobody, since in Hersh's cosmology the DGI, KGB, and other such organizations are obviously mythical. And all this moralizing from a journalist whose principal source on Chile, Edward Korry, has called him such a consistent liar that he has disgraced his entire profession.

And, as with Chile, so with the rest of the book. From such an examination as this, Kissinger emerges unscathed.

Hersh obviously cannot bear the fact that, whereas Richard Nixon was driven from office in disgrace, Henry Kissinger's general repute is still high. In the last chapter of his book, Hersh issues the grandiose, bombastic pronouncement that Kissinger, like Richard Nixon, "remained blind to the human costs of [his] actions": the dead and maimed in Vietnam, Cambodia, Chile, Bangladesh, Biafra, and yea, the Middle East. Hersh's book proves not a single word of this.

The present writer, be it understood, has never confused Kissinger with Little Red Riding Hood. Nor would he vote to confirm Little Red Riding Hood as Secretary of State. But he holds Kissinger to be a man of extraordinary gifts, and feels that, though he made mistakes, he did so in what he thought to be the interests of the Republic. The interests served by Hersh are far more dubious.

From my days in the British press I remember Lord Beaverbrook's advice to reporters: if you want to destroy a man you must remember to accord him some praise in the process to give yourself the appearance of objectivity. Clever as Seymour Hersh is said to be, he has never learned this. Perhaps he is not so clever. □



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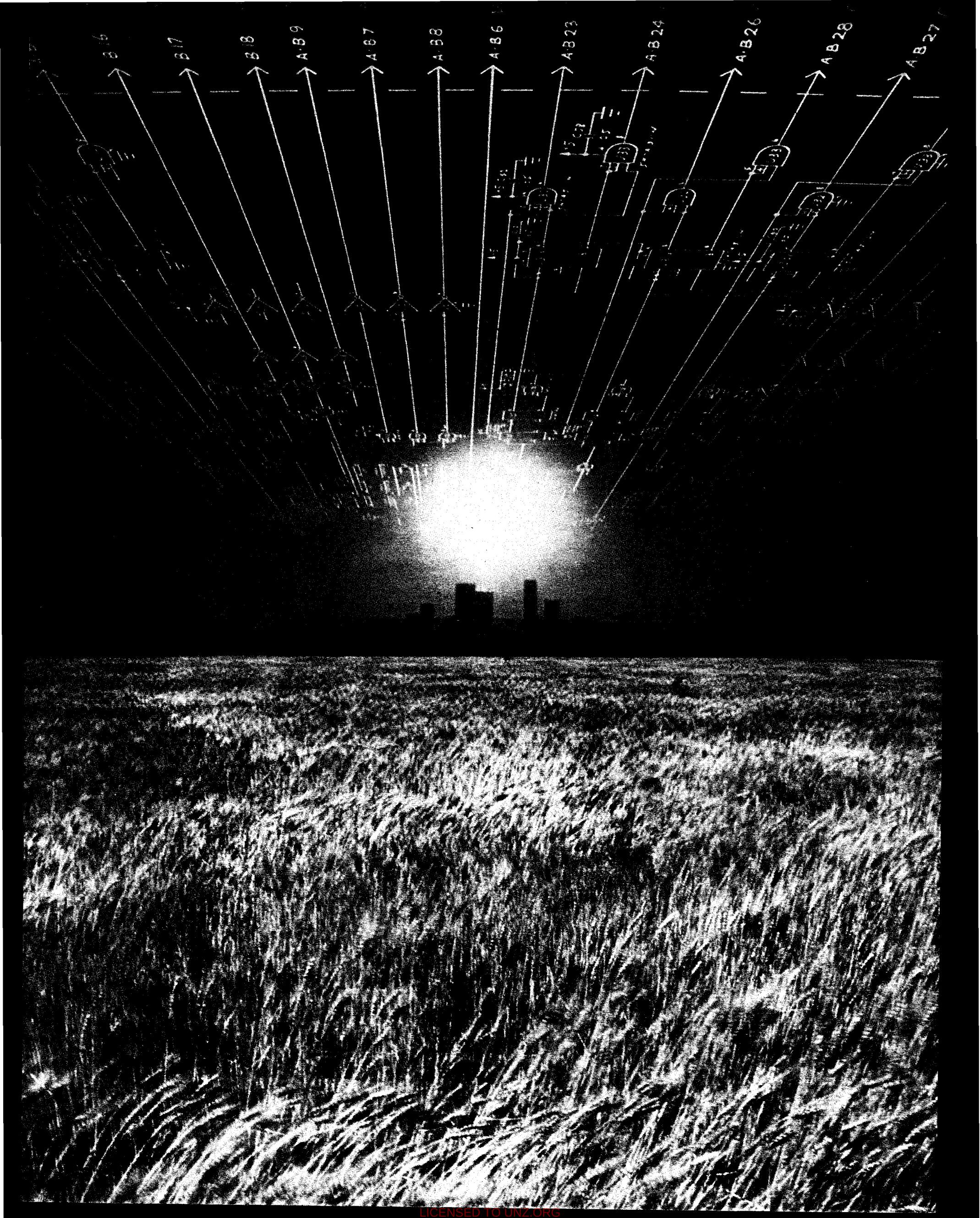

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CONTEL

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Patrick Cosgrave

TRIBALISM AND SOCIALISM IN ZIMBABWE

Why Robert Mugabe wants Big Government.

It is a truism to say that the conflicts of tribalism are at the heart of the post-imperial degeneration of black Africa; but the essence of a truism is that it is true. To be sure, the artificial borders of the colonies created in the imperial era were allowed by the retreating Western powers to remain as the lines delimiting the territories of the newly independent states, and to that extent Britain and France must bear a measure of historical responsibility for what is happening today. However, the burden is nothing as great as that imagined by either Western or African critics of empires and capitalism. Indeed, the reverse could be argued: the empires, including the Belgian, but particularly the British and French, kept the balance between potentially warring tribes, and while without political power (though not as powerless in general as he is in most African states today) the black enjoyed considerable security, and even a modestly rising standard of prosperity. All that is gone. And if there is a severe criticism to be made of the imperial powers it is that they left too early, and too abruptly.

But there is more to tribalism than the kind of naked and bloody conflict that has erupted in Zimbabwe between the 'Ndebele people of Matabeleland and the Shona-dominated government of the country in Harare. On the less important level tribalism, or the necessity in the interests of stability of combating it, is responsible for some of the features of African states that most readily strike the American or European visitor as disagreeable. I recall, for example, in a conversation with President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, venturing a criticism of the fact that night after night—and sometimes hour after hour—Zambian television carried self-glorifying exhortations to the people by himself. Dr. Kaunda—the most courteous and civilized of men—replied by pointing out that there were no less than 33 tribes and sub-tribes in Zambia. Constant rallying, constant exhortation, constant preaching, constant emphasis on the unifying principle of the presidency were merely some of the means he found necessary to achieve the preservation of his country's fragile unity. At the Lancaster House conference in London, which led to the independence of Zimbabwe, the three main leaders—Robert Mugabe, Joshua Nkomo, and Ndabaninge Sithole—were all from different tribes. The incumbent prime minister, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, elected under Ian Smith's power-sharing constitution, was a Shona, like Mugabe, but he came from a different section of the tribe and his group had, historically, been in constant conflict with Mugabe's. Outside the conference altogether was James Chikerema (Cheeky-cheeky bang-bang, as he was known to his friends). Though in many respects the most gifted, least blinkered, and most attractive of all the contenders, Chikerema had no prospect of admission to Lancaster House or of electoral success: his tribe was too small.

The mechanics and the ideology of socialism have been, for former British colonies, the favored machinery for pinning together desperately disparate groups into a united state. Some of the smaller, and successful, French colonies have taken different routes. One or two—like Swaziland—have been relatively successful as independent states, partly through the overwhelming numerical domination of a single tribe, partly because they have so far managed to cling to the formulae of an ancient paternalism. Nigeria and Kenya have modified a basically collectivist system with elements of rampantly corrupt capitalism. But Nigeria had to endure the cruelest of civil wars, and in Kenya the most able politician of the day, Tom Mboya, was murdered on the road of succession to Jomo Kenyatta, the great 'Mzee, because he was a Luo, and the Kikuyu wanted to keep the top job in the family.

But there is another, non-political, reason for the adoption of socialist doctrines by African leaders. The argument was put to me in this way by one of Mugabe's senior ministers in Harare, in connection, particularly, with agriculture. Capitalism, he said, or capitalism modified by collective welfare provision, such as obtains in Britain, may well work—and work well—in a country that is, in terms of economic culture, modern, that is, one whose people understand the basic rules of buying and selling, of making and doing, of production and productivity. I having remarked earlier on the quite extraordinary generosity of the Mugabe government to white farmers (they are much less generous to white industrialists or white bureaucrats), my companion used this as an illustration in his argument. The time-encrusted tribal traditions, he asserted, ensured that, left to himself, the African will indulge in strip-farming, the method most damaging to the soil, most corrosive of prosperity. Left to himself, again, the African will grow principally for subsistence, and only marginally for the market. Socialism, in its basic form of control from the center, was crucial to ensure the preservation, let alone the development, of the agricultural industry. I summarize this argument not because I agree with it, but because I understand why a man like Robert Mugabe—who calls it pragmatic

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socialism—should, almost in despair, adopt it.

The two aspects of tribalism, then—an ingrained and destructive economic methodology and an inherently fierce competitiveness—conspire, in black African states, to destroy. In Zimbabwe, moreover, recent history has given competition between tribes a vicious twist, and it is this twist that had led to the present crisis. News of kidnappings, terrorism, and brutal counter-terrorism from Matabeleland have made newspaper readers the world over familiar with the present lineaments of that crisis. For me, however, it was graphically illustrated during my last visit to Zimbabwe by a diplomatic difficulty.

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The president of neighboring Botswana was due to visit Zimbabwe. Naturally, his meetings with Mugabe and President Canaan Banana would be the high spot of the trip. The people of Botswana, however, are cousins of the 'Ndebele. It would be unthinkable, therefore, if His Excellency did not call on Mr. Nkomo. Nkomo, however, had fallen out with Mugabe and resigned from his government in protest against what he considered to be the harassment by Zimbabwean security forces of some of his own people, former members of his Zimbabwean National Liberation Army, and what Mugabe insisted was merely the suppression of armed and dangerous elements. Since Nkomo was sulking in Zimbabwe's second city—Buluwayo, effectively his capital—the president would have to go there. But Mugabe could not let him go alone, lest it be thought that it was unsafe for himself to enter Matabeleland. He went, therefore, accompanied by a bodyguard of a thousand men, a remarkable force for a man who, unlike most black African leaders, eschews large retinues.

The rivalry—enmity is not now too strong a word—between Mugabe and Nkomo springs, however, not simply from ancient tribal roots but from their relative positions in the history of the independence movement, and their resulting personal assessments of their own worth. Nkomo likes to style himself "Father of Zimbabwe," because he is the longest serving of all the country's leaders. (Sithole, Muzorewa, Chikerema, and others who were at Lancaster House have long since disappeared into obscurity.) However, throughout the long history of the struggle to overthrow successive white governments in Rhodesia, Nkomo was always prepared to compromise. Mugabe, from his late emergence as a Shona leader, was adamant that no halfway house to black majority rule, however brief the period visualized for its life, would be acceptable. Recognition of his greater intransigence, coupled with the relatively massive numerical preponderance of Shona voters, ensured his pre-independence electoral triumph.

Before independence, during the election campaign, and for some time afterwards the relations between the two men produced a curious, and still relevant, paradox in Western—and particularly American and British—policy. By no stretch of the imagination could the enormous, food-guzzling, paternal, and jolly figure of Joshua Nkomo be considered a Marxist, or even a socialist. Yet, of all the putative black leaders, he was the one who made large numbers of trips behind the Iron Curtain, especially to East Germany. It was Russia, and other Warsaw Pact powers, that fueled his arsenal. By contrast the ascetic, prim, academically eloquent Mugabe neither visited Communist countries nor sought their aid: "I have not taken, and will not take, as much as a bullet from them," he told me in Mozambique early in 1979. But he was a self-declared—self-indicted, if you like—Marxist revolutionary. Washington and London preferred Nkomo's private professions—I recall a hilarious meeting in his hotel room during the Lancaster House conference when this gigantic man, clad only in socks and underpants, padded around explaining that his Eastern visits were merely eyewash—of pro-Western attitudes to Mugabe's actions. We may not have been wrong in believing Nkomo—we never had a chance to find out—but we were certainly wrong in assuming, on the basis of his rhetoric, that Mugabe was a Communist puppet.

Nothing since independence has suggested that we were right. Much was made, it is true, in the Western press of the savage repression of Nkomo's people in Matabeleland by the Fourth Brigade, trained by the North Koreans in order-restoring methods which would bring blushes to the cheeks of Soviet commanders in Afghanistan. But the creation of the brigade exemplified, in my view, Mugabe's ruthlessness rather than any Communist leanings. Both the British instructors attached to his armed forces for the purpose of post-independence training, and the majority of Zimbabwean whites who had served in Ian Smith's army, quite simply refused either to participate in thorough-going methods of suppression or to train black troops to do so. Mugabe simply sought out the best killers he could find who would not present a threat to his own power—as the Cubans have done to the Angolan government—and hired them. It may all be deplorable, and inhuman, but it can also be argued, in the light of my earlier sketch on tribalism and its consequences, that it was necessary.

There is no doubt that the application of domestic economic socialism, with its attendant centralizing of economic control and the speeding-up of a black advance in all sectors of the economy, has done enormous damage to Zimbabwean prosperity. That prosperity, for all the miracles of improvisation achieved by the Smith government during the years of isolation, was already fragile by the time of independence. Contrary to left-wing suspicions in the West, South Africa was always, except in the supply of oil, a niggardly patron of independent Rhodesia. "Quite simply," an Afrikaner businessman who has lived all his adult life in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and intends to leave his bones there told me, "we could not have gone on any longer, because the South Africans would not back us up." That man is now an enthusiastic supporter of Mugabe, and by his testimony hangs yet another paradox.

Mugabe simply sought out the best killers he could find who would not present a threat to his own power.

Practically without an exception (Ian Smith is, perhaps, one), the white Rhodesians who were most passionate in their denunciations of Mugabe—who, if they had to have a black leader would have always supported Nkomo—are now his greatest admirers. It is all very well, from all parts of the political spectrum, in London or New York or Washington, to attack the deployment of the Fourth Brigade. But to a white farmer in Matabeleland the man pointing a gun at him or his wife or his children is an 'Ndebele, an Nkomo man, even if old Joshua cannot control him, and the knight galloping to his rescue is a black killer trained by the North Koreans. Moreover—though, of course, these are still early days—Mugabe is unusual among black African politicians in being personally utterly incorruptible, and that judgment applies also to all the ministers closest to him. In addition, he has shown remarkable restraint on an issue close to his heart, that estab-

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lishment of a one-party state which is the consuming ambition of the vast majority of African politicians. That, he says, is something for the distant future, and to be attained only by consent, not by imposition.

There are shadows on the horizon, however, and not only in Matabeleland. The fledgling state remains, and will remain for some time, heavily dependent on the skills and sophistication of the white community. The white emigration rate, though, is high, in spite of the formidable difficulties placed in the way of removing any of one's substance abroad. But the rate is higher among whites of the newer vintage: the majority of Rhodesians of old stock seem determined to stay, and those in Mashonaland have little to complain about in their lot, in contrast to their fellows in Matabeleland. Virtually to a man, however, they regard their time as limited. Men and women of, say, forty or fifty are sanguine that they are secure for their own lifetimes, but they see to it that their children are educated abroad, for preference in South Africa or the United States. Their universal conviction is that there will be no place in the Zimbabwe of the future for the next white generation, and they fear that even the time allowed them may be foreshortened if anything happens to Mugabe. Against this settled gloom the passionate reiteration by Mugabe and his ministers of their determination to build a racially equal state—if only to show the South Africans that it can be done—has little weight. Nor is their cause well served by such incidents as the trial of white Air Force officers for sabotage, be they guilty or not. So, the conclusion is that white time, if not actually short, is definitely limited.

For the moment, however, there is a delicate balance, if perhaps a precarious one. Harare remains its decorous, beautiful self, and even its black inhabitants refer to it as often as not as "Salisbury." Meikles Hotel, the epitome and encapsulation of all that was graceful in colonial Rhodesia, is as it was, and the blacks so recently given the free run of its facilities regard it with the same affection as do the whites. Unlike any black African capital I have been in, Harare has nothing of the shanty town about it. Compared to Harare, Lusaka, for example, is a run-down village. The poise, the cleanliness, the loveliness of the city may all be evanescent. Its peacefulness may partake of something of the character of a mirage. But at least for the moment the jewel of Central Africa shines brightly. □

Benjamin J. Stein

THE CHILDREN OF SUNSET BOULEVARD

Who's watching the kids?

I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

Lunch last week at the commissary at MGM with W., a woman television producer who makes as much money as the Emir of Kuwait on a good day. "I have something to show you, boychick," she said. "You want to see the direction of the media? You want to talk major televison trends? Come with me, kid."

We walked past a long line of women dressed in chicken suits to a huge sound stage. Waiting outside in the January sunshine was a group of terrifying-looking mothers reading *Variety,* the *Hollywood Reporter, Casting Call,* and the *Drama-Logue.* They had anxiety written on their faces as clearly as on a man on death row. Inside the sound stage, in the cool darkness lit by klieg lights in a corner, a television producer with a little beard and tennis shoes sat in a canvas director's chair. In front of him were three little girls, about fifteen years old at most. They wore tight shorts, T-shirts that said MGM, and little sandals. Behind those girls was a line of other fifteen-year-old girls reaching so far into the darkness that I literally could not see the end of the line.

The girls were reading an audition scene which the television producer had written. In the scene, one of the girls does push-ups while another does chin-ups on a steel bar, while the third does her nails. As dialogue, all three of them discuss what "totally radical" boys go to their junior high school.

The producer is a man who can make or break a governor's campaign with his contributions. "What's your favorite kind of date?" he asks the girls after their "audition."

"I like the idea of a date with Richard Gere where he shows up in a black Ferrari 308, takes me to the movies, then we get pizza," says a winsome child from Burbank with braces.

"Good," says the producer. "I like the Pizza Hut myself." He has his own table at Chasen's. "I love Pizza Hut," he adds.

"Me, too," says the girl.

"Jesus Christ," says the producer under his breath. "Jesus H. Christ."

I wish I could tell you that the scene in the sound stage at MGM was just the working out of a pedophiliac fantasy by a powerful TV producer. Alas, it is something much more. It is his own way of filling the maw of demand for TV shows with children as stars. On every studio lot, in every casting office, on every day of the week, the lines of children, boys and girls, equally fetching, equally fevered with ambition, reach out the door, and the next day the casting calls go out again.

To gauge the need for these kids, take a peek at two typical evenings' network schedules.

Wednesday:

•9 p.m.—CBS—"Running Out"—The story of the efforts of a runaway mother and a strict father to compete

Benjamin J. Stein's latest book is The Manhattan Gambit (*Doubleday*).

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for the attention of a twelve-year-old girl.

•9 p.m.—NBC—"Facts of Life"—Purely by chance, a fifteen-year-old girl learns that her favorite teacher is leaving school.

•9:30 p.m.—NBC—"Family Ties"—Two small children taunt an FBI agent while their parents look on admiring the kids' effrontery.

Thursday:

•8 p.m.—NBC—"Fame"—Two fifteen-year-olds fall in love, chaos ensues when a teenage *boy* may have posed for a dirty magazine.

•9 p.m.—NBC—"Gimme a Break"—Chaos ensues when the young teenage *girl* of the family may have posed for a dirty magazine.

•9 p.m.—ABC—"Too Close for Comfort"—Reminiscences and confusion around the subject of the teenage daughter's new beau.

•10 p.m.—ABC—"20-20"—Major segment on how to prevent adolescent acne.

The ABC "20-20" segment used only real people, of course, but you get the picture. There are a lot of shows on television about children from preteen to upper teens. These shows need actors. That's why producers who would rather drive a Ford than eat at the Pizza Hut gossip with fifteen-year-olds about the girls' dream dates.

Prime-time shows with kiddies as major players have increased from almost none ten years ago to close to half of all regularly scheduled prime-time shows today. Of the new sitcoms that aired last season, more than seventy percent centered on children. These are not Ricky and David Nelson-type children or Beaver Cleaver-type children, living in good-natured awe of their parents, rotating like satellites around their parents' lives. Today's TV children are almost always independent of their parents. Often, as in "Facts of Life," "Powers of Matthew Star," or "Fame," we see them completely removed from their parents. Today's TV kids do not care about their parents' censure. The modal parent/child relationship is that of "Gimme a Break." When the crusty old widower father has a romantic problem, the daughters give him the Bronx cheer and the back of their teenage hands. The daughters need not fear punishment. It is a staple of television that children are *never* punished on the air. If a parent ever does begin punishment, as when Archie Bunker sends his niece to her room for giving him the raspberry at the dinner table, the parent (Archie) will be up in the niece's room literally on hands and knees, pleading for her forgiveness before the end of the show.

But the supply/demand ratio of child actors is not what astonishes me. There will always be enough dissatisfied, frustrated stage mothers in Los Angeles shoving their children out to auditions. Nor is the amazing part the fact that so many children on TV are spoiled little brats who show only the most snickering contempt for anyone's problems but theirs. After all, there are plenty of nice kids on TV, too, and TV producers are only showing children as they know them.

The amazing part, the part that leaves me in a daze within a daze, is that the American people have suffered, even invited, the juvenilization of the television medium to a degree that would have struck me as inconceivable only five years ago. Yes, there have always been shows with children. Yes, we all remember "Father Knows Best," "The Partridge Family," "Ozzie and Harriet," "Leave It To Beaver." But the size of today's phenomenon dwarfs the past. It is as if all the kid shows of the past were on, multiplied by five, right this minute. To give some idea of the phenomenon's size, twice as many person-hours were spent watching Gary Coleman in 1982 as in manufacturing all the steel and iron in the United States. More time was spent watching children's shows on prime time than in manufacturing all the automobiles, steel, and chemicals in the United States in 1982. More person-hours are spent watching children's shows on prime time than are spent by all the employees of the federal government at work in the present era.

More person-hours are spent watching children's shows on prime time than are spent by all the employees of the federal government at work in the present era.

Why? Why has America suddenly decided that it wants to see children on TV complain about not having dates or about having acne before a dance or about not being able to go on a ski trip or not having the "Vector" video game cartridge instead of shows about car chases or shootouts on city streets or invaders from outer space or wife-swapping or getting rich quick?

Is it because there are so many children in the audience? As Richard Nixon said to John Dean when he was asked for a million dollars for Howard Hunt, it would be easy to say yes, but it would be wrong, that's for sure. In fact, the great majority of the viewers of the kids' shows are men and women between the ages of 25 and 49. Child TV watchers in prime time are not a large group and are utterly unimportant to advertisers. Then why? Why is all America absorbed with the rites of passage of teenagers and pre-teenagers?

That is the part that confuses me. Should I laugh or cry? My pal, Al Burton, who made a great many of those children's shows and showed us some of the better kids on TV through Norman Lear's company, Embassy, goes part of the way toward the answer. "Today's family is different," he says. "Today's family doesn't have the kids around the hearth, going to church together, going to the movies together. The kids are gone somewhere. So the TV children take the place of the real children."

In other words, we have the electronic child around the electronic hearth.

But I am afraid that Al Burton does not go far enough. Ratings demographics tell us that tens of millions of Americans are watching those TV kids *even while their own children are right there in the home.* Little Jason and Lisbeth are there in the rec room waiting to be played with, but the parents prefer to spend time with Gary Coleman and Amy Linker. Little Brad and Page have out their dollies and their Donkey Kong, but Mom and Pop are watching "Square Pegs" and "Little House on the Prairie."

The parents of America, in large numbers, are choosing the synthetic child of television in preference to the real children in their own lives. The synthetic child, after all, may be a little self-obsessed creep, but he does not ever come home at age fifteen reeking of gin and marijuana. The TV child can be arrogant and self-centered, but he never refuses to clean up his room, certainly never needs to be changed. The TV child can be unsympathetic to Mom's problems, but he will never show up with a boyfriend in dreadlocks.

Most important of all, when the real life parent is tired of the synthetic child, *he can just turn the TV off.*

Please do not get me wrong. I love children and I think most parents work hard to be good Mommies and Daddies. But the evidence is indisputable that tens of millions of Mommies and Daddies who could be spending their time playing or talking with their own kiddies—who are right there in the home—are instead watching children on TV. The further evidence is that millions of childless couples spend part of every evening with their synthetic children on TV.

To some extent, an extent that could never be measured precisely in any event, the TV child, the synthetic child, has won a large niche in adult America's heart, replacing, to some extent, the affection and attraction of real children. This was unavoidable, some might say, since we now have synthetic politicians, synthetic religion, and synthetic food. Why shouldn't we have synthetic children? That's the part that makes me wonder whether to laugh or cry.

We can live with mail-order politics, and with TV religion, and certainly with Big Macs. But how do we continue as a nation with synthetic children little by little supplanting real children?

I thought about that for a few days, then I called W., the powerhouse woman producer. What were her views on the subject? She gave me the only answer I expected. "Benjy," she said, "let me put you on hold." □

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Josef Škvorecký

PRAGUE WINTER

Fifteen years after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, a reassessment.

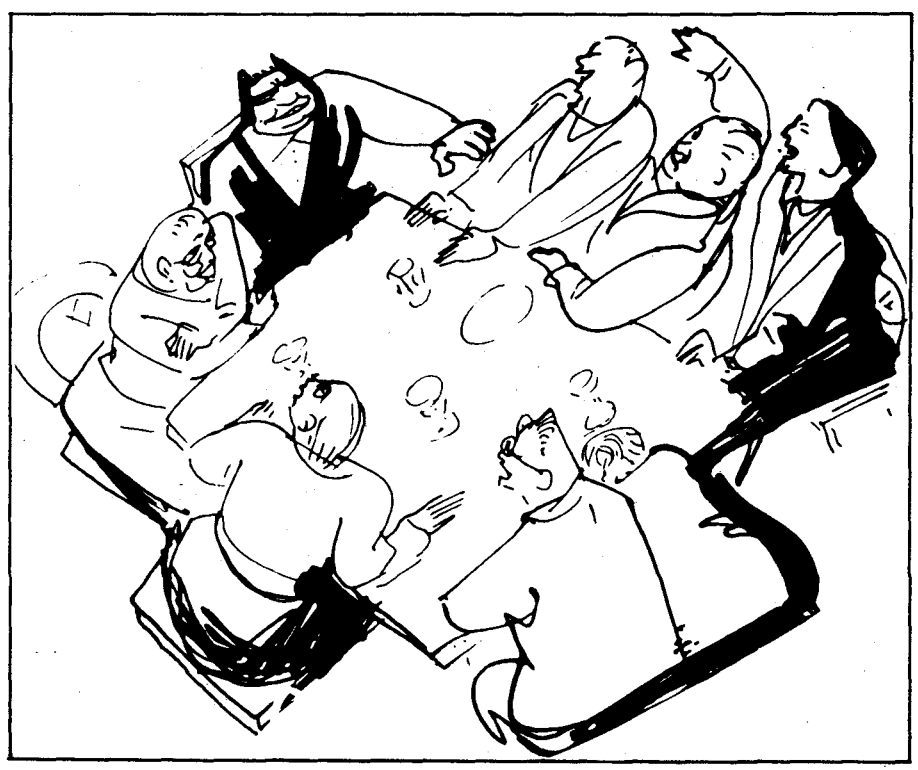
Suppose an aircraft designer talks the Boeing Company into financing an airplane which, according to its creator, is guaranteed to be faster, safer, and more comfortable than any ever built. In the course of a century the company goes on to build several dozen prototypes, but they all prove slower and more uncomfortable than the previous models, and able to return to Mother Earth only by means of crash-landings. Yet the company continues to turn them out. Certainly, the originator of such an insanity would be recognized as a genius; not perhaps of aircraft design, but of conmanship.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx. The ultimate result of his dialectics seems to be Poland, where the workers' party has been replaced by an alliance of army and special units of stormtroopers, where class justice has been superseded by martial law, and where the folksy party leader has given way to a ramrod general who looks like a South American junta boss envisioned by Costa-Gavras. As predicted, the state has withered away: first into the country-wide jail of martial law, then into the universal barracks of military discipline imposed on the industrial work force, with everybody drafted for an indeterminate length of time.

The past 25 years or so have witnessed other crash-landings of Marxism, and the story is becoming a bore. Consequently, the year 1968 does not ring many bells, and *The Writing on the Wall* will go unnoticed by most Americans.* In the distant days when I still attempted to explain things to left-leaning North American acquaintances I invariably asked: "If you are interested in Communism because you think it would be good for this country, why try to find out how it works in Albania, Angola, Mozambique, or in some other safely unverifiable region of the Earth? Wouldn't it be more logical to study what it does to old Western cultures, as for instance that of the Czechs and Slovaks?"

What it does to such cultures is touched upon in *The Writing on the Wall.* The gory events of the fifties do not find their way into the 35-odd pieces in this volume. This is not a book about Communism's past but about its future. That's why it will move only such readers who, in this land of soft bodies and pampered souls, still believe that to oppress the mind is as reprehensible as to oppress the body.

A remarkable story by Eda Kriseová, "Our Small Town," illustrates the impact of Marxist social engineering on a society where problems of literacy were solved in the previous century. Its female intellectual narrator quietly observes the daily habits of contemporary villagers who spend their free time gorging themselves on smoked pork and drudging on the building sites of private retreats. No music, either folk song or symphony, resounds against the strangely barren landscape. Only the smell of wieners seeps through an atmosphere of devastating senselessness. A metaphor, of course, for what the Czech Party ideologues have come to call *reálný socialismus.* This recent addition to the Marxist lexicon cannot be translated as "real socialism"; English lacks the decidedly pejorative connotations "reálný" has acquired in Czech, and "real" in English may also mean "true." But *reálný socialismus* can mean a deadpan general or toneless country gluttons, depending on the state of the local economy. But never a workers' council or a blooming contemporary culture.



"Really? And what about those wonderful concerts in the Renaissance Rudolfinum Hall in Prague? What about the lavish Shakespearean productions?" say my left-leaning acquaintances, fresh from a trip to Prague of half-Didion duration. "And although we, unfortunately, cannot read Czech, we are told that not everything in the bookstores there is trash."

Well, all dictators love fiddlers, but suspect penpushers, except those who are safely dead. There is a crucial difference between the creative and performing arts when it comes to their manageability and propaganda value. And as for "not-so-trashy" books . . .

Let's imagine a young Mark Twain who lives in the Old South in the days of slavery but under conditions of literary censorship as strict as those in today's Czechoslovakia. This hypothetical Sam Clemens is as obsessed by literary fame as any budding writer anywhere anytime. He gets the idea for *Huck Finn.* But he faces a dilemma. If he builds his novel around the central issue of Southern society, i.e., slavery, the book will be seized by the censors, and its author, quite possibly, by the police. Yet the call of the printer's ink is irresistible. So young Clemens does a little focus-shifting—away from the immorality of taking a man's freedom to, let's say, offenses against proper Southern table manners—and his "sivilized" *Huck Finn* is soon on the market. It is a funny, entertaining, well-written book. It's just that something is missing from the story.

In a feuilleton by Vlastimil Třešňák, a man badly in need of money sells a few drawings to an art shop. In better days, an artist-friend had given him those pictures. The manager displays the new acquisitions in his shop window. The police soon arrive,

**The Writing on the Wall: An Anthology of Contemporary Czech Literature,* edited by Antonín Liehm and Peter Kussi. Karz-Cohl Publishers, $19.95.

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equipped with a secret list of undesirable artists. The uninformed manager is reprimanded, the drawings are confiscated. The police ask for the address of the seller, who is then apprehended and accused of trafficking in anti-state art.

Nothing much, is it? Just a little unpleasantness. Multiply it by ten million, and chances are you will begin to sense the quality of daily life under *Realsozialismus.* But chances also are you won't. If, like Mr. Doctorow, you don't see much difference between Auschwitz and Disneyland, how could you see the dissimilarity between New York and Prague?

One aspect of this daily life is a special kind of schizophrenia. In Pavel Kohout's story "Trouble," two secret policemen, by means of electronic bugs, tape the goings-on in the private apartment of a dissident writer. What is going on is perfectly normal: the writer has breakfast with his wife, they are seized by a sudden lust and make love on the floor; the man then goes to the toilet and has a bowel movement (at this point, one of the policemen discreetly turns down the volume). Then the woman says goodbye, the writer retires to his room. For the rest of the policemen's shift he pounds on his typewriter.

What goes on between the two policemen is also perfectly normal: the younger complains about his unfaithful wife, the older gives him advice about how to deal with females in general, and with fickle ones in particular.

In short, everything in the story is perfectly normal. In that kind of society. Some of the pieces are more ominous. When Ludvík Vaculík leaves home to attend the funeral of Professor Patočka, a 70-year-old philosopher who died during a twelve-hour police interrogation, he is picked up and driven to the police precinct, where he is kept until the funeral is safely over. In the meantime, on a track adjoining the cemetery, a group of motorcycle racers begins intensive training, and the priest's funeral oration is drowned out by the unmuffled exhausts. A police helicopter hovers a few feet above the open grave. This is not an attempt to emulate Kafka; it is not even a story. Just a piece of reportage.

These little clashes with real-socialist power accumulate, and eventually become nauseating. But there is little blood in these stories. Only the soul bleeds occasionally. More horrifying things happen to bodies elsewhere. In countries where the Marxist-Leninists got their first chance at blood-letting only recently; not way back in the fifties, as in Czechoslovakia. Prague, these days, is simply uninteresting. Newsunworthy.

Or is it? This city of ancient Western culture, driven over by the Marxist steam roller? All right, so far the stories I have quoted have been about intellectuals who, if American experience is any indication, have a tendency to grumble. What about ordinary folks who are believed to be better off—perhaps because the Western liberal presumes such types can live by bread alone—than they were in the old days of the Thomas Baťa Shoe Company? In Ivan Klíma's story "A Christmas Conspiracy," a former writer, now working at odd jobs and occasionally finding a "front" for his TV plays, gets a temporary job selling Christmas carp for a grocery store. The job becomes his initiation into socialist entrepreneurship. A shopgirl, regularly employed by the grocery, tells him about a number of tricks based mostly on mixing cheap stuff with more expensive stuff, which brings the store a nice profit. The profit is split up among all the employees who work as a team. Or rather, a gang: penalties for betraying the collective are forbidding.

But such shares in the fruit of fraudulence are small change. The girl has a more grandiose dream. She tells the writer about gas stations where one can "pull in ten thousand a month if it's a halfway decent pump." There is just one hitch: the franchise costs, in bribes, at least 25,000 crowns. The girl is so obsessed by the vision of the riches-bringing pump that she drags the writer into a big crate in the storage

room and offers to sleep with him if he'll promise to become a partner in the bribing-scheme. "Mr. Ivan . . . your friend told me about you, that you write for the TV and make a nice bundle . . . Mr. Ivan, for a man like you twenty thousand means nothing. I've already saved up the rest, I know about a great pump, in six months it would be paid off and from then on it would be all gravy . . . in two years we'll save up enough for a house . . . we'll take trips to the seashore, won't that be great?"

A remarkable story by Eda Kriseová, "Our Small Town," illustrates the impact of Marxist social engineering on a society where problems of literacy were solved in the previous century.

Yes, ordinary folks definitely are better off under *Realsozialismus.* To the amazed former writer, who compares them to himself and his fellow dissidents, officially described as "antisocialist conspirators," their lively community appears as a "world full of real conspirators . . . an all-penetrating conspiracy of people who saw the futility of all ideals and the murderous ambiguity of human illusions . . . a determined fraternity of true materialists who knew that you could count only those things that can be counted, that money can buy anything and anyone—except Death (which they don't worry about) and except a few isolated fools whom they clap into prison, kick out of the country or shove into cellars to stoke furnaces and indulge their idle cogitations."

This perhaps is more useful reading for the Western left-leaning man than news items about poetry workshops, recently organized for the Nicaraguan police force. We had them, too, thirty years ago. This is a story about the future of the future, and how it works.

The final metaphor for the metamorphosis of the working class and their leaders in *Realsozialismus* is Vaculík's feuilleton "First of May." This is a traditional socialist holiday in Europe, commemorating the victims of the Haymarket Riots in Chicago. In Czech literature, its mood was first captured in a feuilleton by the poet and journalist Jan Neruda (a nineteenth-century Czech liberal whose surname was misappropriated by the twentieth-century Chilean Stalinist Ricardo Reyes). Apparently one is not permitted to quote from Neruda's account in today's Czechoslovakia. It contains allusions to the Prussian invasion of the country in 1866, and a surrealistically associating reader might be reminded of something the Soviets did in 1968. Neruda writes about the silence of the marching workers and about the dedicated speeches of their leaders. In Vaculík's description of the same day's celebration three quarters of a century later, a worker, waiting for the commencement of the march, calls to a busy functionary: "Mr. Organizer, mark me present!" The difference between what Neruda saw many years ago and what Vaculík witnessed in 1975 stands revealed; defamiliarized, if you wish. Yes, indeed. You have to be marked "present," if you happen to have a daughter, and she wants to go to high school.

Eventually, Dr. Gustáv Husák, the Czech president, is about to make a speech, when all of a sudden the public address system fails. No sound comes out of the amplifiers, and so the crowd resumes talking "quite loudly" about what interests it most; mainly soccer. In the feuilleton of the past, the workers listened silently and attentively to their leaders. In the feuilleton of the future's future, the leader performs the pantomime of a TV announcer rendered mute, and the workers, not giving a damn about him, twaddle about trivialities.

I am not particularly fond of literary symbols, but some are simply a natural outgrowth of reality.

The Writing on the Wall is a book of ruins, of hopes "grotesquely betrayed, ideals caricatured" (Joseph Conrad). Only readers who once lived among those ruins are likely to pick it from a bookshelf. This, I suspect, is the fate of most such works published in the United States. Aimed at readers who will never know of their existence, they end up in libraries of people who do not need their message. They know it by heart. They remember what happened in 1968.

Yes, the Democratic Convention; that too. But it was also the year of the Prague Spring, of the glorious temporary insanity that befell the Czechoslovak Communist Party. Quite a few unread volumes describe and analyze the events, idealize or

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defame their protagonists. To me (I was there) this *annus mirabilis* remains something of an enigma. Was it naivete that led the Dubcekists—all of them, for years, dedicated Marxist-Leninists, in many cases with a shady Stalinist past—to create a situation that could not but become explosive, and eventually unmanageable? Were they serious about their promises? Did they indeed intend to hold free elections, convinced, as some of them said, that the people, out of gratitude to the Communist Party for giving political freedom back to them, would return it to power? But how grateful can you be to a thief, who, for unclear reasons, returns your stolen property? And can you trust him in the future?

If, like Mr. Doctorow, you don't see much difference between Auschwitz and Disneyland, how could you see the dissimilarity between New York and Prague?

Such naiveté in people as politically hardened as the Dubčekists seems incredible. In my own simplified view, it all started in the early sixties, after official revelations of Stalinist "excesses" began spilling out. Smacking so patently of the Gestapo rather than of noble revolutionary violence, these confessed horrors shook the idealists among the comrades: the former young activists and hotheads who had been blinded by uncritical acceptance of an unexamined ideal. I remember them after these revelations, talking excitedly into the wee hours over empty bottles of slivovitz, swearing, blaspheming, weeping, even apologizing to some of their victims. At least a portion of such carryings-on could have been genuine.

In 1963, Alexander Dubček, a bona fide working-class boy, signed one of the most horrifying documents on the unspeakable crimes of the fifties, the report of the Kolder Commission "investigating the violations of socialist justice." The one which describes innovative methods of Marxist penology, such as keeping prisoners' hands in tight rubber gloves until fingers begin to rot away, or a spectacular variation of age-old hunger-torture which leads half-crazed prisoners to offer their eyes for medical research in return for a piece of bread, or to eat their own excrement. He was also familiar with the content of the later Piller Report which cited the recommendation of the Ministry of Justice that the passing of death sentences be slowed because their accumulation in brief spans of time affects the sanity of the executioner. All this, mind you, in an official Party document, available—in the Czech—also in the West. Not some John Birch Society pamphlet.

So, as I see it, in the beginning was this eye opener. Then came Ludvík Vaculík's famous speech at the Writers' Congress in 1967, contrasting optimistic visions of socialist reality with actual achievements. It followed in the wake of a long internal Party struggle between those who were not shocked—the convinced Stalinists and the cynical opportunists—and those who were. The struggle was fierce and outspoken. Although Communism creates an elitist society and there is no democracy for the citizen, there is something called "inner Party democracy" (a Leninist heritage). It enables high Party functionaries to indulge in frank discussions behind closed doors. Naturally, for the public stage, they are required to change back into parrots, no matter how openly they quarreled *in camera*.

But the shocked ones got used to this private-club democracy, and slowly, with the Stalinist guard weakening and the opportunists changing sides, some of it spilled over, first to the cultural weeklies, eventually to general periodicals. The public was puzzled, then amused, finally excited. The Stalinist president Antonín Novotný along with his cohorts and censors tried to curb the flow. Savage battles were fought over such grave ideological issues as the nakedness of the protagonist in Miloš Forman's *Loves of a Blonde*, about the resemblance to Lenin of the leading actor in Jan Němec's *Report on the Party and the Guests*, or about the wasting of food in Věra Chytilová's *The Daisies*.

So far so good. Unfortunately, the process created new illusions. The shocked ones, having once succumbed to the illusion of a just dictatorship, now began to see themselves as the natural leaders of a democratic movement; in fact, as pioneers of some kind of democracy. In the heat of battle, it slipped their minds that other leaders had once been duly elected, and then—often with their help—silenced, forced into exile, or even liquidated. They forgot also that the majority of the public had never subscribed to Communism. In the end, they labored under the illusion that, far from just being leaders of a Party faction, they were spokesmen for the entire people, loved and esteemed by the masses. In actual fact, the common people supported them only because they knew—having learned the hard way—that in a totalitarian state decisive change can come only from above.

On this there was tacit agreement between the public and the proponents of reform. Where they differed was in the forgetfulness of the self-hypnotized Party liberals, and the good historic memory of most of their subjects. The rest was almost all a bad miscalculation by politicos who, despite their many years of speaking in the name of the masses, knew nothing about the real and often vengeful spirit of the democratic crowd. They expected, for instance, that the enforced discipline of Stalinism would continue even after the total abolition of censorship (another bit of lunacy from a CP gone mad). But the lure of uncensored freedom proved too tempting. Ivan Sviták, now a professor of philosophy at California State University, drew attention to the case of Jan Masaryk, the half-American son of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, who although he owned a revolver and a wide assortment of sleeping pills, was said to have committed suicide by jumping out of a third-floor window. A nurse revealed that the priest Father Toufar, arrested after a cross had miraculously moved in his village church at Čihošť, died on the operating table from numerous internal injuries suffered during police interrogation. A criminologist showed me, without commentary, police photographs of a hanging judge from the fifties who had just hanged himself from a tree, his legs bent stiffly at the knees. An old butler of a former non-Communist politician fell into a well and perished. The director of my publishing house, the one-time secretary of the Stalinist president Klement Gottwald, died in Prague after a prolonged visit to Moscow, of a heart attack during a stroll in the park: his body was never seen by anyone, not even his widow. Just a sealed coffin in the crematorium. The commander of the Czechoslovak armored forces put a bullet through his head. The Communist reform movement was quickly assuming the characteristics of a cheap thriller.

And people literally got drunk on freedom. Political prisoners organized themselves into a vociferous Club. Non-Communists started the KAN, a club of non-Party activists. Those window-dressing parties listed in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as proofs of pluralism in Communist Czechoslovakia made efforts to come to real life. Father Plojhar, the quisling priest (and worthy ancestor of Nicaragua's pro-Sandinista divines) who for twenty years had been chairman of the Catholic People's Party, had to resign in disgrace.

By then, completely flabbergasted by the incredible *commedia*, I saw with absolute certainty how this experiment would end. I just thought it would be with a bang, not with a whimper. Like the *Zauberlehrling* in Goethe's poem, the reformists had brought to life the dangerous spirit of democracy, and now they were unable to get rid of its logical consequences. For too long they had been used to shouting meaningless slogans, which no one had ever taken seriously. But this time people did take their words seriously, and so did the Soviet Union.

For a brief time after the armored ambush the public supported the Party leadership as their acknowledged leaders; perhaps even loved some, above all the kindly, innocent-looking, and so obviously suffering Mr. Dubček. Emotions naturally swelled under the impact of Soviet violence, cruelty, cynicism, primitivism, and murder. The fact that close to one hundred people died in Prague alone during street fighting (including, allegedly, the black actor from my film *End of a Priest*) is often overlooked; Czech resistance was not entirely passive. A general strike saved Dubček's life. Instead of treating him like Imre Nagy, the Kremlin

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masters returned him to office—to office, mind you, not to power. Then, with the help of a Fifth Column, an anti-Semitic pressure group of old Stalinist stormtroopers called the Jodas Men (*Jodasovci*), and also of the surviving Stalinists in Dubcek's Central Committee, and of the opportunists on all levels of the Party apparatus led by Dr. Gustáv Husák, the Soviets began to undermine the reformists' position. The popular emotions reached their peak after the self-immolation of Jan Palach, a non-Communist Charles University student,† and then, in true Czech style, after two consecutive victories of the Czechoslovak ice hockey team over the Soviet *kommanda* during the 1969 World Championships. Crowds shouting ultra anti-Soviet slogans filled Wenceslas Square, drivers honked their horns. A victorious pandemonium: the joy of a small nation over the justice of games, where an ant-sized David can beat a brontosaurus of a Goliath. Then somebody smashed the shop-windows of the Soviet airline Aeroflot.

The Soviet commander responded with an ultimatum: either the Dubček government prove to be in control, or he will move his forces stationed twenty miles east of Prague to the capital. Proof was provided by the ever-ready Dr. Husák, who replaced Dubček as Party chairman. Dubček resigned, lingered on as the chairman of the National Assembly, a powerless club of yes men, then as ambassador to Turkey, then as a clerk in a forestry office in Bratislava, eventually as old-age pensioner. His supporters from among the shocked emigrated or submerged. Some ended up in jail, others as professors at American universities.

The people, disgusted, frustrated, oppressed more than ever before, came mostly to the conclusion that the entire Prague Spring was just another case of one set of Commie rascals fighting another set, and since non-Communists will never again have a say in anything, anyone in his right mind should not concern himself with these gang-wars, but instead give all his energies to the building of private retreats of well-furnished apartments, well-stocked wine cellars, and well-chosen country cottages. Eventually—quite soon, in fact—only a tiny group, which in time proclaimed the Charter 77 document, was still willing to combat the plague, not just abuse it over a glass of beer. The group had the sympathies of most people; some even sent anonymous donations. But most also regarded its members as dare-devil idealists; yes, even as characters who are not quite right in the head. In a perverted way, Soviet psychiatry is accurate: civil disobedience in the Soviet empire is indeed a symptom of mental abnormality.

But there is a hitch here; a subtle demagogic trick; a shift in meaning. The demands of the dissidents are perfectly legal: respect for the Constitution which guarantees personal liberty and all the human rights specified in the UN Charter and reaffirmed by the Helsinki Agreement which was signed by the Czechoslovak government. But to make such demands in a Soviet colony exposes the demander and his family to untold miseries, to the dangers of socialist prisons, even of death. So whereas the dissidents ask for things that, in terms of the Constitution and of valid laws, must be considered *legally* normal, the *act* of demanding them is *psychologically* abnormal. It is in conflict with the instinct for self-preservation. Soviet psychiatrists, naturally, never ask the interesting question: namely, what, indeed, makes such actions abnormal? Bertolt Brecht knew the answer when, in *Galileo Galilei,* he has one character exclaim: "Unhappy is the country that needs heroes!" And he was being hypocritical when he got mad at Orson Welles for telling him the play was anti-Stalinist.

Of course, every citizen of Czechoslovakia is aware of the answer, too. He knows that he owes his relative safety and relative prosperity to his civil obedience. Which, in the context of all totalitarian dictatorships, translates as cowardice.

Few people who feel like cowards will relish the power that makes them feel that way. Judging by the manuscript novels smuggled to me from Prague, the vast and truly silent majority is now past even hating Communism. I am not speaking about the works of known dissidents, but of authors who are university students, members in good standing of the Communist youth, "progressive non-party citizens": in short not the third- but the second-class citizens. On the outside, these "conformists," the "grey zone" of real-socialist society, have become "normalized," as the Party lingo has it; that is, they have conformed to the post-1968 political climate. They express their thoughts and feelings only in intimate circles of the most trusted friends, otherwise they follow the nauseating rituals of "socialist progressivity."

But occasionally the accumulated frustration spills over into the clandestinely penned pages, delivered then by courageous emissaries to distant Canada. The feelings about Communism captured there are much more critical—to use a polite word—than those one can find in books by such dissidents as those represented in *The Writing on the Wall.* The dissidents (they themselves don't like this label, since it's not they but rather the government that dissents from the Constitution) either continue to consider themselves democratic socialists, or, understandably, are somewhat inhibited by the fact that they are not and cannot be—their literary styles are easily recognizable—anonymous. Out of frustration and disgust, some have become apolitical. But the non-normalized voices of the "normalized" are anonymous, and they therefore speak without solicitude, without the hard-to-overcome consideration for one's political past (they have none), and without illusions. They are *jenseits von Kommunismus und Kapitalismus.* They don't even *hate* Marxism-Leninism. All they feel for it is boundless contempt. □

†One detail about this pathetic youngster was rarely mentioned even when Palach himself still was: he spent the first part of the summer of 1968, before the Soviets stepped in, in a student camp in the USSR where he apparently ran into trouble with the camp's authorities when he tried to organize a protest against the mismanagement of the place. The second part of the same summer he worked for a private farmer in France. No trouble there.

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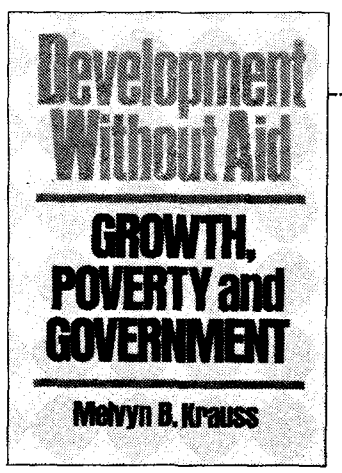

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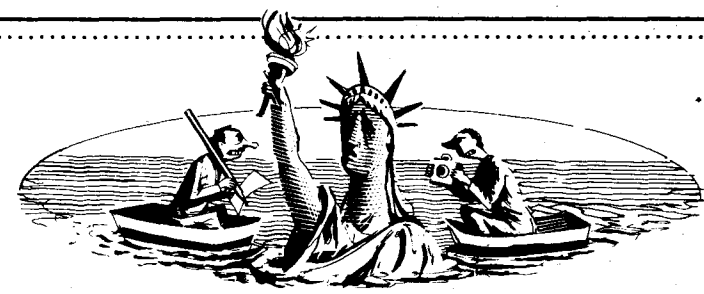


ANYTHING GOES

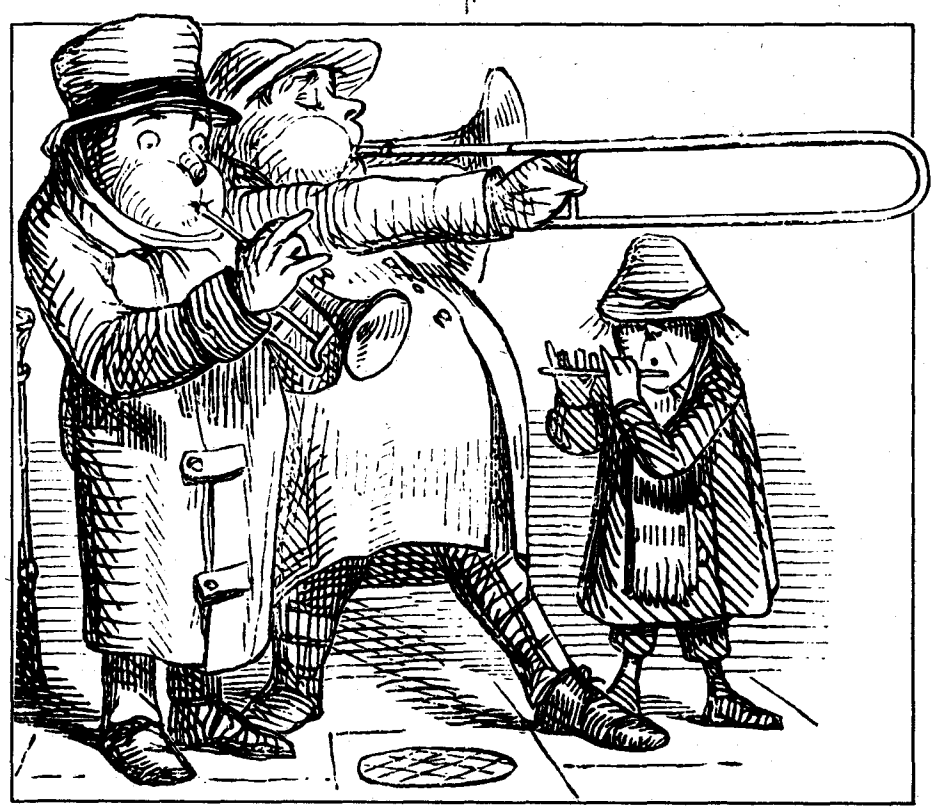
by Fred Barnes

Democrats called a press conference in mid-July to announce the formation of a new National Caucus that would promote a single, coherent alternative to President Reagan's policies. Selected to be a co-chairman—and major-domo in charge of attracting reporters—was Robert S. Strauss, the gregarious Washington fixture and former aide to President Carter. But Strauss was scarcely asked a question about the new Democratic organization. Instead, a television reporter peppered him with Debategate queries. "President Carter is quoted as saying there was more than one mole in the White House," the reporter asked. "Do you agree with him?" To his credit, Strauss refused to take the bait, saying that he didn't have the foggiest idea about moles in the Carter White House. Nonetheless, questions about moles persisted, and afterward the reporter who had insisted on making Debategate the focus of the press conference was rewarded a few bouquets of congratulations from her colleagues.

So it goes, as the Washington press feasts on the issue of how a debate briefing book and other documents got from the clutches of Carter and his minions to the Reagan presidential campaign team in 1980. Silliness? Partly, but not completely. It is, after all, an interesting issue; it is a legitimate issue. There may even have been some punishable wrongdoing involved. All of which warrants considerable coverage, though hardly the breathless, high-crimes-and-misdemeanors treatment it has received. But press overreaction to a shadowy story of potential lawbreaking or misconduct by presidential aides shouldn't surprise anyone. This is business as usual—and not only in the case of a story about Reagan. Given half a chance, the press always overreacts. Who do you think stoked up the AIDS hysteria? It wasn't Dr. Marcus Welby. Who do you think made Billygate a major flap in 1980, one that drained political energy from President Carter? It sure wasn't the Republican National Committee.

Where conservatives go wrong in assessing Debategate is in concluding that ideological animus was the cause of the press riot. "In the media seizure of this issue, and in the tenacity of their pursuit, we perceive what genuinely interests this capital city of the West," wrote columnist Patrick Buchanan. ". . . What delights and captivates this city, as nothing else, is the delicious prospect of catching a major conservative with his pants down." True, most reporters, being liberals, would love to see Reagan stripped bare. But that just doesn't happen to be the source of their rapt attention to Debategate. The press, at least since Watergate, would do the same to any President or major politician, conservative or liberal.

The crucial distinction here is between two types of critical stories about Reagan and his presidency. One is the pure ideological broadside, the type of story in which normal journalistic restraints are put aside in order to hold up some Reagan policy to public shame. Scads of these stories appeared in 1981 after the ballyhooed spending cuts cleared Congress, with both the examples of suffering attributed to Reagan's coldheartedness and drastic overestimates of the size of the cuts repeated endlessly. My favorite was the Charles Osgood spot on the "CBS Evening News" to the effect that the "budget cutting wind" was "blowing strong enough . . . to tear the roof off" some programs, "food stamps, for example." In truth, the food stamp program had been trimmed from $11.4 billion in 1981 to $11.3 billion in 1982. More recently, as Vernon Guidry pointed out in the *Washington Journalism Review,* CBS has taken the tack that Reagan was responsible for the recession, but the Federal Reserve had acted to prompt the recovery. You just don't drift to that conclusion without some ideological compass pointing you in that direction.



The second type is plain, old sensationalism, the exploitation of a less-than-earthshaking story by the press because the yarn is a good one. Exaggeration and prolonged, largely unwarranted coverage are the hallmarks of this kind of journalism. I put Debategate in this category. In judging whether I'm right, please remember Billygate, the flap that bedeviled Carter in the midst of his re-election campaign. It was catapulted to the status of major scandal, though the only wrongdoing involved was Billy Carter's failure to register with the Justice Department as a foreign agent of Libya. Even so, it wasn't as if Billy were acting as a secret agent for the Libyans; his connection with them and the money they had passed his way was well known and widely reported. Yet the press was relentless and Congress joined in by holding hearings. Who benefited politically? The most conservative presidential nominee in decades, Reagan.

It was, in fact, just like Debategate, except the presidential victim was not a conservative Republican President but a moderate Democratic one. No matter who is in the White House, the press attacks at the scent of presidential blood. Sometimes that assault seems to be delayed, making it appear that the press is regurgitating old evidence for the sole purpose of discrediting a President. In Billygate, the attack came several years after Billy's Libyan tie became known. The press charged when there was a hint of influence-peddling by Billy at the White House. In Debategate, the disclosure that the briefing book had changed hands didn't stir the press initially. But reporters glommed onto the story when Reagan aides tripped over their own accounts of how the briefing papers came to them, contradicting each other or even themselves at times. Once this happened, pandemonium in the press was inevitable; that is simply the way that daily

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journalism works these days. It's nothing to brag about, though the usual stream of lame, self-righteous excuses for the overkill have been offered up. They boil down to: we've got to do this because there might be some real wrongdoing to ferret out. Debategate may not be "anything more than a summertime diversion," wrote Richard Cohen in the *Washington Post.* "It might, after all, amount to nothing. If that is the case, then no one in the Administration need worry. But if it turns out to be a major scandal, then the public will once again rely on the press to keep it informed—even if it has to publish purloined papers to do so." The point, though, is not that the press should drop its investigations into Debategate. The point is that it shouldn't publish stories that only belabor the issue without illuminating or advancing it.

Ben Wattenberg, the conservative Democratic journalist, expects that the Debategate debauch may prompt a public backlash against the press. "Since Watergate a tendency has grown up to take a minor story—sometimes true and sometimes not—grab it by the scruff of the neck, to shake it again and again, and to squeeze until a steady stream of contradictory statements can be made to sound like big time corruption, thereby dominating television day after day," he wrote in a July column. "It all turns out to be fun and games for reporters hot on the spoor of yet another 'Gate.' But the right questions for journalists to ask should concern whether the Gating process is either accurate or beneficial. . . . It is not beneficial to the press. As one trivial Gate follows another, all sound and fury signifying nothing, people begin to look at journalists in a funny way. Soon they come to the conclusion that the journalistic profession is dominated by silliness and the reporting can't be trusted to get anything right. Soon there will be a demand for Reportergate." Well, maybe, but I'm not going to hold my breath. The prevailing rule is that being a reporter means you never have to say you're sorry—even when wrong. Just ask the Carters.

Conservatives upset at Debategate coverage might have a stronger position if they had been complainants when Billygate was the issue. But if any of them condemned the press treatment of Billygate, they never did so in my hearing. Likewise, attempts to defend columnist George Will for his dalliance with Reagan during a debate practice session are undermined by the suspicion—actually, it's a certainty in my mind—that conservatives would be outraged if a liberal columnist had done the same thing for a Democratic presidential candidate. What would be the reaction of *Accuracy in Media* or *Human Events* if it turned up that, say, Joseph Kraft had dropped by a Carter debate practice and tossed out a question? And on top of that, he had also seen a copy of a Reagan briefing book on the desk of Hamilton Jordan earlier in the day? They would pillory Kraft.

Unless you subscribe to the theory that the enemy of my enemy is my friend, there's no reason to rush to Will's defense. There is a line that separates reporters and columnists from politicians, and it's not a fine one. Will crossed it. He's hardly the first. Richard Harwood, the deputy managing editor of the *Washington Post,* confessed that as a young reporter in Nashville he had written a politician's speech, then reported on it, then written a favorable editorial about it. In Washington, reporters and columnists have often joined

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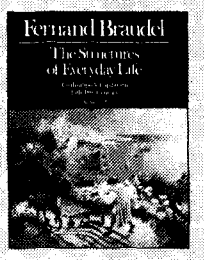

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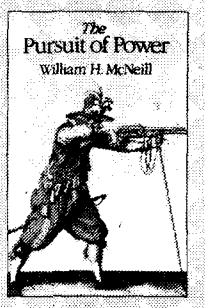

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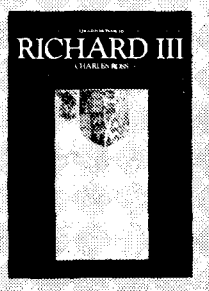

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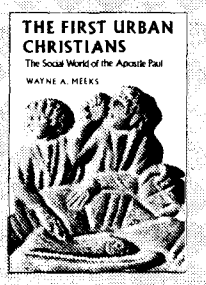

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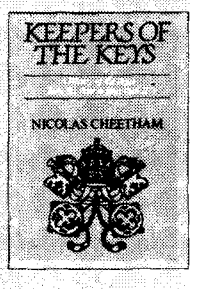

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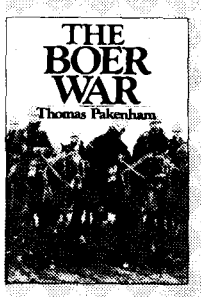

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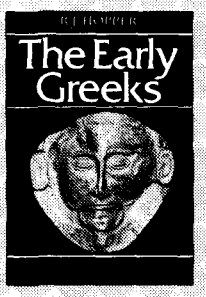

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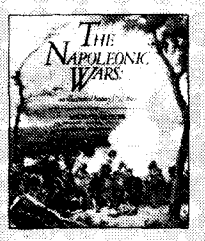

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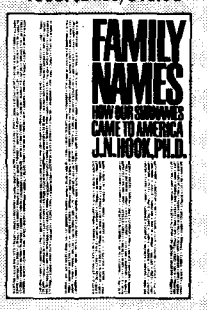

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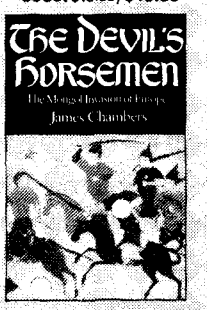

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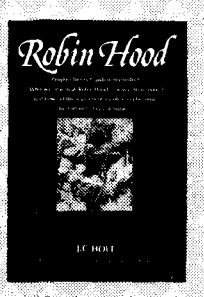

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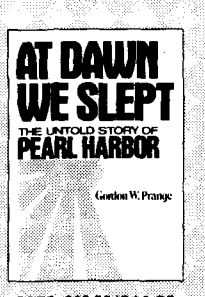

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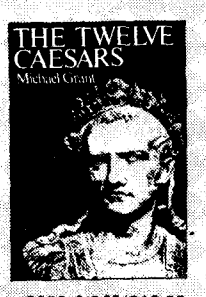

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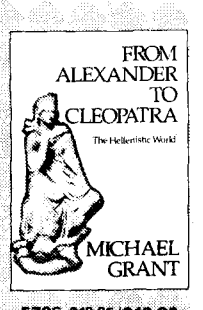

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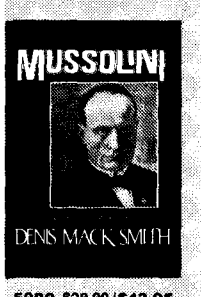

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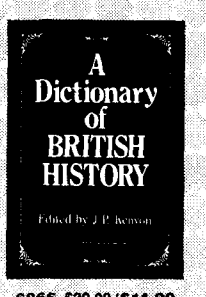

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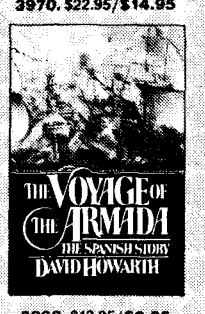

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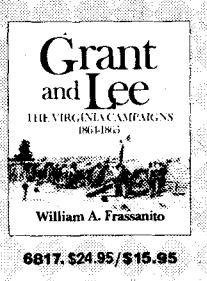

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forces with politicians, he noted. "The Will episode is merely a symptom of a much larger problem within the Washington political/journalistic community," Harwood wrote. It is, but that doesn't excuse Will. Admittedly, what passes for journalistic ethics is largely hightoned posturing that masks an anything goes mentality, but there is one rule that has some flesh to it: you don't participate in campaigns you're writing about.

Wrong as Will was, he hardly merits the kind of criticism that has been dropped on him. The attacks are worse than the crime. Jimmy Breslin, one of America's least credible columnists, wrote that Will's words "are an insult to the news business." Well, I can think of lots of insults to the news business, but Will's peccadillo isn't one of them. For instance, there is the practice of attaching "-gate" to every minicontroversy that comes along (a practice in which I have repeatedly indulged). Or there is the recent clumsiness of reporters in working toward a single name for the case of the Carter papers. Some called it Briefingate, some Debategate, some, like Cohen, moaned about the lack of agreement on a single name. For an insult to the news business, that little exercise will do just fine. □

THE PUBLIC POLICY

STRIKING THE PUBLIC

by Howard Dickman

At the dawn of the industrial era, the influential classical economist John Ramsay McCulloch demanded a reform of English law to enable wage earners collectively to set "whatever price they please upon the labour they have to dispose of." After all, he argued, since capacity "to labour is to the poor man what stock is to the capitalist," it made no more sense to deny laborers the right to combine together to "dispose of their property as they might, in their collective capacity, judge most advantageous to their interest" than to prohibit men from pooling their capital in a joint stock company. McCulloch's arguments prevailed in England; and so too did these individualistic sentiments prevail in America, particularly after the epochal common law decision, *Commonwealth* v. *Hunt* (1842).

Of course, as McCulloch's contemporary Lord Francis Jeffrey insisted, if employees have the right collectively to offer their individual labor for sale, they have the right to withhold it as well. Since a "single master was at liberty at any time to turn off the whole of his workmen at once—100 or 1000 in number—if they would not accept the wages he chose to offer," there was hardly "equality or fairness" to make it a crime "for the whole of the workmen to leave that master at once, if he refused to give the wages they chose to require."

I suspect most people find McCulloch's, and Jeffrey's, defense of the right to organize and the right to strike enormously appealing. I know I do. And certainly the legal structures of all the major free societies, including our own, have come to recognize, in one fashion or another, these rights—although they have often done so only by chipping away at what Lord Jeffrey assumed were the employer's reciprocal rights. Yet, in reading *Public Employees, Unions, and the Erosion of Civic Trust,* a coolly written, important, and compelling new book by Randolph H. Boehm and Dan C. Heldman,* I was once again reminded that Lord Jeffrey, as so many other liberals before and since, fundamentally misunderstood the phenomenon—the strike—he wanted to defend.

Howard Dickman is editor of the Manhattan Report. *He has just written a book on the history of industrial democracy in America.*

**Public Employees, Unions, and the Erosion of Civic Trust: A Study of San Francisco in the 1970s.* Alethia Books: University Publications of America, $25.00/$9.00 paper.

Public Employees is a well-organized, blow-by-blow study of San Francisco's spectacular public employee strikes in the mid 1970s. Based on extensive newspaper research and personal interviews with many participants and observers, Boehm and Heldman recount the dramatic, even sensational episodes of violence, political skullduggery, and sustained tension while guiding the reader through the many complicated legal, political, and economic issues surrounding public sector collective bargaining, as this institution has grown, and grown phenomenally, in the 1960s and 1970s.

Aided by an unusual degree of municipal referendum power, and goaded by a fiscal crisis, San Francisco ultimately managed to defeat the more predatory of the unions' demands. Nevertheless, the entrenched political power of the municipal unions—demonstrated, the authors suggest, by a pattern of massive voter fraud during several referenda—remained intact. And since the 1970s, what citizens thought they had won on the city level, namely control of their own political destiny, union strategists have been steadily undermining on the state level, and in the courts.

It is this extraordinary political power which is perhaps the authors' most significant finding, and it fortifies their "deep skepticism as to the value of both militant public employee organizations and of the trend toward applying private sector collective bargaining models to the public service." This trend has accompanied the substantial increase in public service employment in state and local governments, and has, when challenged, been defended by the so-called "private sector analogy."

Yet, as Boehm and Heldman demonstrate, the analogy is deeply flawed; and indeed, the flaws are recognized by many who are otherwise sympathetic to the claims of organized labor. Government, after all, is not just another employer whose "interests" must be assumed to "conflict" with its employees—who must be "protected" by fundamentally adversarial unions. Public sector strikes inescapably challenge the ability of government to function,

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a consideration which has long accounted for popular antipathy to collective bargaining in the public sector. Sovereign governments, including democratic sovereign governments, do not negotiate their *right* to govern. When they do, it is not they, but those with whom they negotiate, who are the true sovereigns. This insight has been recognized by virtually all political leaders, from Calvin Coolidge and Franklin Roosevelt on the one hand to Lenin and Mussolini on the other—or for that matter, by René Levesque in Quebec, Ronald Reagan in America, and Wojciech Jaruzelski in Poland.

Quite aside from the political differences between private and public sector bargaining are the economic ones. Strikes and collective bargaining can damage, and have damaged, the economic interests and prospects of consumers, nonstriking workers, and investors. But there are constraints "built into the system," as it were. As long as consumers can take their business elsewhere, there is a reality principle that cannot be suspended indefinitely—as some of our unionized industries have recently come to relearn. But where no substitution is possible—where the good or service is a government monopoly ultimately supported by tax revenues—the situation is otherwise, especially so in a democracy, where the organized employees, through their bloc voting power, are "represented" on both sides of the bargaining table.

Yet some of what makes people uneasy about unions in the public sector ought, I believe, to set them to rethinking "private sector collective bargaining models" as well. For too long, fundamental issues have remained undiscussed; even, one might say, undiscussable.

One of these issues is the strike itself. Most people, like Lord Jeffrey in the last century, define the strike as the concerted *withdrawal* of employees from the workplace, and equate this act with an employer's *dismissal* of his work force. The problem is that the strike was, and is, no such thing. Whether in the public or private sector, workers who "withhold their work," as Boehm and Heldman correctly note, believe they are "keeping their jobs." They don't believe they have quit.

In fact, the notion that striking workers have a collective property right to their jobs is absolutely central to understanding strikes and strike behavior, particularly the sort of behavior to which we apply the military term, "picketing." For it is here that organized laborers try to enforce what they believe is their right to set whatever price they please on the labor they have to dispose of—by preventing anyone else from disposing of his. Moreover, it is here that the "collectivist" nature of the property right they assert is most apparent. Strikers believe, of course, that their right to a job is superior to their employer's right to operate his business without them. Historically, they have claimed this right on the basis of the time they have spent at ("invested in") that job. Yet during a strike they seek not only to prevent new workers ("scabs") from taking their places, but also to prevent already employed but nonstriking workers from working—that is, from exercising *their* presumably valid property rights. Finally, in many jurisdictional disputes, past and present, unions have baldly sought to seize work never before performed by their members and boot out those presumably property-owning, unionized colleagues already doing it.

Not surprisingly, therefore, a nineteenth-century union theorist like George Gunton could casually mention that "to prevent others from taking strikers' places is an essential feature of the strike itself." More surprising, perhaps, in light of his reputation as a civil libertarian, is the recommendation (in 1913) of Louis Brandeis, the nation's then leading "public interest" lawyer:

> In the control of picketing the old common law of trespass should be borne in mind, as expressed in the Latin rule, *"Molliter Manus Imposuit."* (He used force with moderation.) Everyone is

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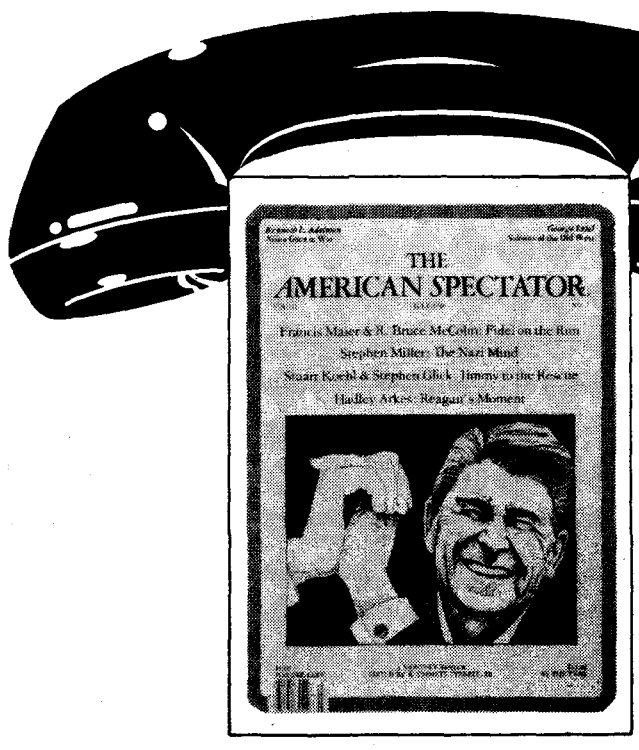
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permitted by law to impound trespassing cattle by driving them and shutting them up. Everyone may induce a trespasser to leave his premises by the exercise of such force as strictly may be required. The same principle holds when a picket seeks by similar means to induce another workman not to enter the employment of the business against which a strike is in force.

Given this theory of property rights, explosive collisions in the private sector are virtually inevitable, modern labor law's professed concern with "labor peace" to the contrary notwithstanding. And indeed, strike violence and vandalism in the private sector are still far more prevalent than many are willing to recognize. With public sector unionism modeled on (and justified by) the private sector analogy, what can we look forward to?

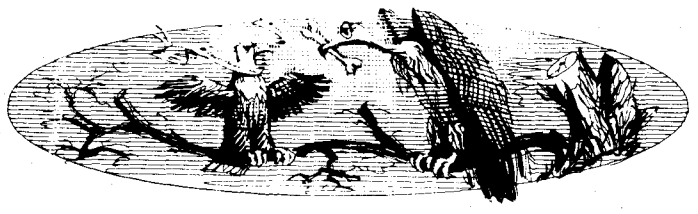
Consider a few of the episodes recounted in *Public Employees*. After the San Francisco *police* struck in 1975, the

officers who remained on the job found conditions extremely risky. Their cars were heavily vandalized in police parking lots. Tires were slashed, brake lines cut, and windshields shattered. They were threatened by pickets as they left the stations and, with strikers monitoring radio calls over their own radio sets, inspectors or non-striking officers responding to a call for help were often met on the scene by strikers who snapped pictures and threatened revenge once the strike finished (including the "hint" that the "strike breakers" might not receive rapid assistance in the future should one of them call for help in a dangerous situation).

Mayor Alioto in this instance announced that he might dismiss these strikers, yet then entered into a "bargaining" session with their representatives. A few hours later his house was bombed. One of the city's vital water mains was sabotaged, and millions of gallons of raw sewage poured into the Bay, posing a grave threat to public health. After a frantic search, the city found a non-union plumbing contractor to repair it. Unfortunately, this "scab's" identity was discovered, and he was mercilessly harassed for months thereafter, including one near escape from a sniper's bullet.

The organized labor movement in America has never officially opted for socialism, and has strong anti-Communist foreign policy credentials, which facts have been duly applauded or deplored by conservatives or radicals, as the case may be. Yet I wonder how many people are fully aware of just how closely strike behavior can parallel that of terrorists? Come to think of it, violent private sector strikes used to be referred to, by friends and enemies alike, as acts of "industrial warfare." This raises an uncomfortable question. Are violent public sector strikes acts of insurrection? □

THE NATION'S PULSE



THE ART OF HISTORY

by Wilfred M. McClay

In the beginning, history-writing was story-telling. Yet when Homer sang of Achaeans and Trojans battling on the plains of Ilium, or when the Old Testament authors recounted the tribulations of a people blessed with a destiny of distinctiveness, they did more than tell a story. These early narratives stood at the very center of their civilizations, at the heart of social and spiritual life. They expressed their people's shared values and cherished aspirations, embodied their collective memory, imparted life-sustaining meaning to their sufferings. They were many-sided mirrors into which a people peered, again and again, to interpret themselves and reaffirm their identity. They were also civilizing agents. Even as they mirrored a society's special shape, they served to perpetuate it. A great narrative and a great civilization seemed unimaginable apart from each other.

The conjunction of the two lasted well into the nineteenth century, in the form of grand narrative histories —exemplified by such works as Macaulay's celebrated *History of England* and George Bancroft's ebulliently self-confident *History of the United States*. With the rise of professional history-writing in the late nineteenth century, however, the traditional story-telling role began to give way to an analytical, "problem-solving" approach to historical inquiry, modeled after the empirical methods of natural science. Stripped of its former eminence, narrative history fell into disrepute among historians, and has played almost no part in the tremendous growth of historical writing since World War II.

Even so, narrative history, if only as an idea, refuses to disappear entirely. The "scientific" approach to historical writing has never lived up to advance billing. As Bernard Bailyn admitted in his 1981 presidential address to the American Historical Association, the proliferation of analytical history-writing "has served not to illuminate the central themes of Western history but to obscure them." Bailyn called for a revival of narrative writing, an approach endorsed by other eminent historians. By using the story-telling form to link the findings of analytical research, Bailyn's proposed "complex narratives" would "bring order into large areas of history" that now lie in formidable disarray. These new narratives would conserve the best of both worlds.

An attractive, if sketchily conceived, prospect. Can it be realized? Or is the narrative form too antiquated, and the professional literature too fragmented, to permit any such union? An examination of two large-scale attempts at grand narrative in American history, both published in the past year, suggests the shape a narrative revival could take—if it comes. The first of these books was James MacGregor Burns's *The Vineyard of Liberty*, * Volume I in a projected three-volume history of the United States entitled *The American Experiment.* Then came Robert Middlekauff's *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789*,† the first installment in what is to be an eleven-volume series, The

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*Knopf, $22.95.

†Oxford University Press, $25.00.

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Oxford History of the United States.

Athough both books are narrative histories, they reflect quite different intentions. Burns, perhaps best known for his partisan biographies of FDR and JFK, is a venerable curator of the Vital Center, closely associated throughout his career with such New Deal enthusiasts as Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., William E. Leuchtenburg, and Frank Freidel. Although Burns is curiously silent about his reasons for undertaking a multivolume narrative history, the primary motive could not be clearer: to give new life to dispirited present-day liberalism by providing it with a usable past. His aims, in other words, are more political than scholarly; far from responding to Bailyn's suggestions, he seems largely to have ignored them.

Middlekauff's concerns, on the other hand, are much closer to those troubling Bailyn and other professional historians. The long-awaited Oxford series, under the general editorship of C. Vann Woodward, is explicitly designed to synthesize the findings of recent American historiography into a general narrative account of each major period in American history. It is, in short, the very model of Bailyn's "complex narratives." Hence, unlike Burns, Middlekauff must write with two quite different audiences in mind. The Oxford books are *ostensibly* for the general reader—but they will first have to pass muster with professional historians, to whom the Oxford series has come to represent far more than just another big publishing project. The series will test whether the fragmentary work of today's professionals can be pieced together into meaningful patterns. In a word, it is to test the increasingly quixotic hope that the last twenty years of American historical scholarship will add up to something coherent.

In *The Vineyard of Liberty,* whose story stretches from the prelude of the Constitutional Convention in 1787 to the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, Burns bucks many of the most salient trends in historical writing. He writes in a crisp, vivid, accessible style. He places politics, and the doings of great men and political elites, in the forefront of history. The political thought of Madison, Adams, and Hamilton is prominent here, for Burns believes political ideas have integrity and power, rather than merely fronting for material interests.

We can be grateful to Burns for his engaging style. He knows how to use telling detail to illustrate a point. The peculiarly ferocious tone of political debates in the 1790s, for example, becomes more intelligible when Burns sets them against the background of the clamorous, bustling, gossipy, intimate New York City where they took place. His sketches of the Republic's founders, though somewhat lacking in psychological depth, are nevertheless evocative—even in the formidable case of George Washington—as are later portraits of Jackson, Clay, Calhoun, Douglas, and Lincoln.

These loving portraits, however, often stand in stark contrast to the stories in which these men act. Burns repeatedly takes early America's political pantheon to task for failing to meet his high twentieth-century expectations. It's not that Burns has converted to radicalism. He remains an Old Liberal at heart, and deep within that heart lies an enduring affection for the principal players of the American past. But he has also heard the siren songs of his disaffected colleagues who routinely condemn this past as an unrelieved procession of crimes and horrors. Burns thus is afflicted by gnawing liberal self-doubt—the very disease he would heal.

Take his treatment of Lincoln, a figure particularly tantalizing and frustrating to historians in search of acceptable heroes and useful precedents. Burns is only too glad to acknowledge Lincoln's extraordinary humility and compassion, and to praise his opposition to slavery. But when faced with Lincoln's refusal to espouse slavery's immediate abolition and his repeated willingness to subordinate the slavery issue to the preservation of the Union, Burns cannot contain his disappointment: "What was the Union *for*, if not for the ideals of the Declaration of Independence?"

Yet elsewhere in the book Burns lavishes praise on the American political system for its pragmatic flexibility, its capacity for mitigating conflict and promoting fruitful compromise through the checks and balances provided by the Constitution and a strong two-party arrangement. Does it make sense for Burns to express admiration for a compromising system and yet to disparage the very sort of politician such a system is designed to produce? Indeed, he should know better: as he points out, the immediate cause of the Civil War was the failure of the American government's various mechanisms of compromise and accommodation to function—precisely because the system was overwhelmed by the uncompromising force of extremist ideologies, both Northern and Southern.

Needless to say, the Lincoln-Douglas debates do not arouse Burns's admiration, either. Though he neatly summarizes the issues and manages to capture some of the grand theater of these oratorical jousts, he cannot keep his anachronistic perspective from intruding. For all their sound and fury, Burns writes, the debates proved only that neither Lincoln nor Douglas was "capable of reaching into the minds and hearts of human beings, appealing to their more generous instincts, recognizing their fundamental wants and needs, and mobilizing their hopes and aspirations." So how can Burns write—in the very next sentence—that the debates "became a model for vigor-

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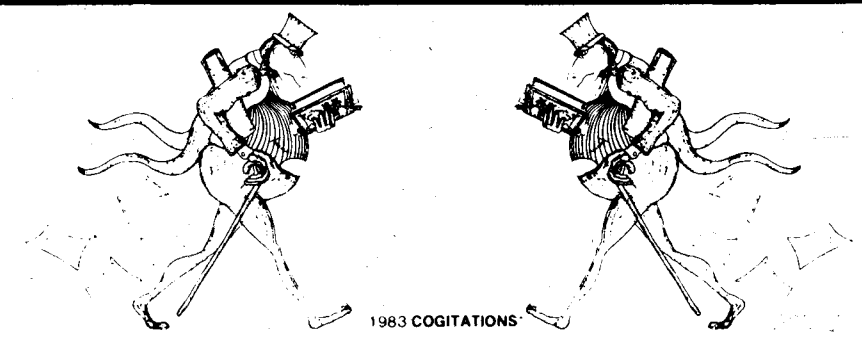

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ous but rational political discussion, and a treasure of the nation's intellectual heritage''? Does Burns seriously expect the American people to ''treasure'' the nearsighted temporizing of two morally bankrupt politicos?

To cite one final example of Burns's present-mindedness, there is his transformation of the makers of Shays' Rebellion, the western Massachusetts agrarian debtors' revolt in late 1786, into ''grass roots'' populists who, by ''challenging the 'system,' '' succeeded in ''fomenting powerful insurrections in people's minds.''

What questions were raised in people's minds by this rebellion: ''When is rebellion justified? . . . [W]ere people who felt cheated in their rights justified in a *republic* in turning to bullets rather than ballots? If decisions were indeed to be made by ballots, how would ballots count? By majority rule . . . ? Or would the minority be granted special rights and powers in order to protect elites against the populace? And under either system would all people—all adult men, women, poor persons, Indians, black people—have an equal voice and vote?''

There is more, much more, but I trust the rhetorical pattern is clear: Burns has turned an irrelevant event into a parable encompassing nearly every item on the liberal agenda. Such is the pattern of his history; he writes not to comprehend the past, but to exploit it. But just *how* to exploit it, given the present climate, is no simple matter. Liberalism has come a long way since 1956, when Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., published the first volume in his *Age of Roosevelt* series. Schlesinger had inherited from the Progressive era a beautifully Manichaean view of American history, and could easily distinguish its businessman villains from its liberal heroes. But a generation of radical assaults on the liberal tradition's most cherished figures, from Jefferson to FDR to JFK, has left all somewhat bloody and bowed. Clearly Burns would like to believe that the Vital Center will hold, and that American history can be made to illustrate the eternal verities of twentieth-century liberalism. But his narrative, far from promising to restore liberalism's health, serves rather to document its sickness.

As impossible as Burns's job may seem, however, Middlekauff's is probably even harder, and his history demonstrates why the hopes of Bailyn and others for ''new narratives'' appear so forlorn. Writing a general history these days is a bit like running for the Democratic presidential nomination: one's ''constituency'' (in this case, the historical profession) is so badly splintered into specialized, single-issue advocacy groups, each of them institutionalized, that only Proteus himself could keep them all happy. But even a suitably protean historian, who pays proper attention to the women's-history lobby, the black-history lobby, and all the rest, has barely begun to do the job. For, just as the effective wooing of particularist interest groups does not translate automatically into coherent public policy, so the attempt to ''integrate'' a chaotic mass of particularist historical writing does not necessarily translate into coherent narrative. Indeed, it seems doubtful that it *can* so translate, for precisely the same reason that all institutionalized interest groups resist integration: because their very self-definition relies on an adversarial relationship to the mainstream.

How, then, to find a unifying theme within the massive literature on the Revolutionary era? Middlekauff's solution was to concentrate to

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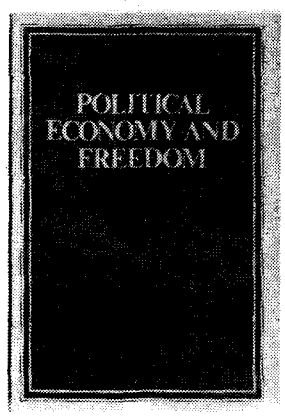

Political Economy and Freedom:
A Collection of Essays

By G. Warren Nutter
Edited by Jane Couch Nutter
Foreword by Paul Craig Roberts

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a surprising extent on the Revolutionary War itself, providing an exhaustive blow-by-blow account of its politics, diplomacy, and battles. I say surprising, because it runs so counter to the current tendency to disparage military history in particular, and "elitist" history generally. There is much to be said for Middlekauff's approach. Historians cannot reduce the importance of warfare in human history simply by ignoring it. And war has literary advantages; like Aristotelian drama, it has a beginning, middle, and end, which makes the writer's organizing easier. Moreover, Middlekauff shows how this particular war directly touched nearly every element of American society; in its waging as well as its results, it was a powerful engine in the formation of American national self-consciousness.

But Middlekauff devotes so much space to the war—half of this 600-page book—that one is forced to conclude that his organizing principle overwhelmed his subject. While the central war story is narrated crisply and coherently, the chapters covering the war's origins and aftermath are disjointed and meandering. This is particularly unfortunate, since the bulk of recent scholarship on the Revolution, good and bad alike, deals with the before-and-after periods, rather than the war itself. It is this scholarship that most needs critical scrutiny and creative sifting by an experienced historian, but Middlekauff has simply not addressed himself to that need. In this sense, it is hard to see that *The Glorious Cause* even begins to accomplish what the Oxford series has set as its goal.

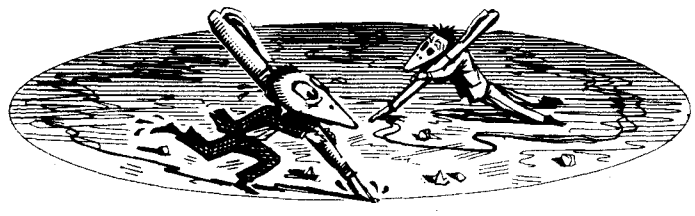
Nor does Middlekauff's prose have any of Burns's redeeming liveliness and charm. At its best Middlekauff's writing is workmanlike and straightforward; but at its worst—all too often—it stumbles into a swamp of blurry ideas, run-on sentences, pseudo-scientism, mixed metaphor, and tone-deafness. A few examples: when discussing the colonies' ethnic composition, he inadvertently conjures up a Gulliveresque vision: "The culture was only imperfectly homogeneous. . . . [T]he standard culture retained its English cast but the presence of large bodies of non-English populations eroded its English texture." When describing English religious persecution, he asserts that "English policy soon cut down opportunities to make a living by discriminating against wool, cattle, and linens from Ireland." In outlining the problems of running an eighteenth-century army, he informs us that "[a]rmies composed of dregs were difficult to recruit, difficult to train, and expensive to maintain. . . . Vagrants, ignorant peasants, and in many cases foreigners who were dragooned or hired felt neither moral commitment to their rulers nor loyalty to their nation which, in a modern sense, did not exist." Similarly awkward, misleading, or unintentionally comic phrases appear on nearly every page. It is difficult to understand why Oxford could not have chosen a more skillful writer for such an important assignment, and even more difficult to understand why Oxford's editorial staff apparently did not notice Middlekauff's motley army of bloopers as they tramped into print.

Ultimately, however, *The Glorious Cause* fails for the same reason as Burns's narrative: because the author cannot quite decide how he feels about the American past. Like Burns, Middlekauff wants to believe in the basic decency of his country's historical record. (Indeed, if the reviews of *The Glorious Cause* that have so far appeared are any indication, he has been much too positive for his colleagues' tastes.) But an undercurrent of self-doubt runs through the book, with much hemming and hawing over any delicate point. Middlekauff's opening paragraph speaks for the rest of the book:

> The title that I have given this book may be understood in this day—when all is suspect—as irony. I do not intend that it should be. The Americans . . . believed that their cause was glorious—and so do I. But their cause, however glorious, had its inglorious sides, and the Americans' manner of advancing it was sometimes false to the great principles they espoused. And therefore, while I have tried to convey a sense of the achievements of the Revolution, I have also pointed to its failures, and tried to understand both achievements and failures and their peculiar relationship.

A historian who bends over backward to create a "balanced" account suggests not the subtle *mésure* of distinguished scholarship, but the absence of any viewpoint at all. This is not the way to revive narrative writing in American history. □

AMONG THE INTELLECTUALOIDS



REICH'S FRIENDLY FASCISM

by Melvyn B. Krauss

When Ronald Reagan claimed that "Fascism was really the basis of the New Deal," the Democrats thought it preposterous. At the 1980 Democratic Convention Walter Mondale attacked Reagan by reminding the delegates of Reagan's claim. "After all," said Mondale, "what kind of person would try to wipe out every program since Roosevelt? He'd have to be a person who believes, 'Fascism was really the basis for the New Deal'! Who would ever say something like that? Ronald Reagan!"

Intent on pinning the fascist tail on the Democratic donkey, Reagan did not withdraw his charge—he expanded it. "Anyone who wants to look at the writings of the members of the Brain Trust of the New Deal will find that President Roosevelt's advisors admired the fascist system. . . . They thought that private ownership with government management and control à la the Italian system was the way to go and that has been evident in all their writings." Recently, FDR admirer and historian William E. Leuchtenburg opined in the *New Republic* that "Reagan would have been well advised to let Mondale's reminder of his earlier misstatement lie . . . There is absolutely no evidence in the writings of the Brain Trust of admiration for fascism."

Professor Leuchtenburg should read *The Roosevelt I Knew* by Frances Perkins. In Chapter 17, Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor describes NRA official Hugh Johnson as "a member of the President's so-called 'brain trust,'" and adds:

> It was no easy task to persuade General Johnson to agree to set up advisory committees. . . . The larger competitive problems between industries he could settle himself. He had the interests of labor at heart, too. That was what the NRA was all about. If he hadn't just given me a copy of *The Corporate State* by Raffaello Viglione in which the neat Italian system of dictatorship for the benefit of the people was glowingly described, I might have felt easier about his counter-proposal to select a labor man to sit at his right and a businessman at his left, for whom he could outline the code and ask if they had any objections.

Clearly, Frances Perkins understood Italian fascism to be more than imperialism, anti-Semitism, and goonism. Italy under Mussolini developed a unique economic structure known as the corporate state. Before Mussolini teamed up with Hitler, the Italian corporate state had many foreign admirers. Among these were the Swedish Social Democrat Gunnar Myrdal and FDR.

According to fascist theorists, workers and employers were to be collectivized into separate groups on the basis of exclusive representation in each private industry. The union bosses and captains of industry were expected to bargain and reach agreement over such key economic variables as wages, prices, and hours of work, and then submit their agreement to the government for final approval. The corporate state, in other words, was to be a system where the bosses made the big decisions and the little guys were expected to follow.

Though Democrats are reluctant to

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admit it, the corporate state constituted the economic basis of the New Deal of the 1930s. The National Industrial Recovery Act, which established "codes of conduct" for different industries, was said to be justified by the country's dire economic condition. Difficult times required radical solutions. Ironically, the same appeal for a corporate state is being made today by Democratic party advisor and Harvard professor Robert B. Reich in his new book, *The Next American Frontier*.* Walter Mondale has praised the book as "one of the most important works of the decade." Senator Gary Hart has observed that Reich's "penetrating insights on how to adapt should be heeded. Nothing less than America's economic future is at stake." For the second time this century, the Democratic party is flirting with economic fascism as an answer to our presumed economic problems.

If the corporate state was a wrongheaded response to the economic crisis of the 1930s, it is totally inappropriate to our present economic situation. Today, with the economy recovering rather briskly, it would seem that it is the Democratic party and not the economy that is in trouble. Out of ideas, several candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination have turned to "neoliberalism" to do for them what supply-side economics did for Ronald Reagan in the 1980 campaign. Though Reich's book has received wide attention, interest is likely to recede at approximately the same pace as the U.S. economy expands.

That is well and good, for Robert Reich's ideas are dangerous and the sooner put to rest the better. His thesis is a simple one: American (and British) firms have become outmoded and inefficient because they do not adequately serve the economic and social needs of their employees. To correct this, a new partnership between government, business, and labor must be forged. "In broad outline," writes Reich, "the system may look like this: Government will assist businesses in modernizing and adapting their production processes. But instead of outright giveaways . . . this new form of assistance will be tied explicitly to upgrading capital and labor. Businesses will be contractually obligated to restructure themselves, as a condition for receiving the assistance."

Reich's plans for the U.S. economy are grandiose:

> The restructuring process will be extended to cover other forms of human capital investment. For example, we can expect that a significant part of the present welfare system will be replaced by government grants to businesses that agree to hire the chronically unemployed. . . .
>
> Other social services—health care, Social Security, day care, disability benefits, unemployment benefits, relocation assistance—will become part of the process of structural adjustment. Public funds now spent directly on these services will instead be made available to businesses. . . .
>
> The firm's employees *collectively* will run these company-wide human capital programs [emphasis added]. Through labor-management councils also comprised of worker representatives, workers will participate in company decisions about physical capital, helping choose the direction and magnitude of new investment in research, plant, and machinery.

Reich is doing more than just calling for fundamental change in the character of business enterprise in the U.S. He is proposing to politicize our economic life beyond anything we've seen since the New Deal (World War II excluded). Apparently innocent of economic history and the fascist origins of his ideas, Reich argues for supplanting the market economy by a process of political negotiations between big labor, big business, and big government. "At this point in American history," writes Reich,

> we need a political revitalization as badly as—and in large measure because—we need an economic one. . . . We will need leaders who are not afraid to recognize frankly the *political choices* that are entailed in *major economic change* and who are willing to choreograph openly the bargaining about them. . . . [W]e will also need a national bargaining arena for allocating the burdens and benefits of major adjustment strategies. Such an arena would enable the nation to achieve a broad-based consensus about adjustment. *It would enable government, business, and labor to fashion explicit agreements to restructure American industry* [emphases added].

Just how dramatic and far reaching these changes would be is made clear when Reich laments how powerless the proposed U.S. Trade Representative's office is compared with what has occurred in West Germany and Japan:

> We have only to compare the USTR with the comprehensive bargaining arena in which West German structural policy is formulated—where many levels of industry, labor, financial, and government leaders thrash out workable agreements on wage rates, selective credit policies, and adjustment—or with the structure and influence of Japan's MITI [Ministry of International Trade and Industry] to comprehend the scale and effort that is implied.
>
> This is not to suggest that either West Germany or Japan provides the United States with an appropriate model. The relative ease with which a consensus about structural policy has been achieved in both countries may have more to do with their recently feudal (and more recently totalitarian) histories than with institutional design.

Is Reich suggesting that a corporate state requires a totalitarian environment?

Reich and other neoliberals (e.g., Felix Rohatyn who for openers would import Mussolini's *Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale* and call it the Reconstruction Finance Corporation à la FDR) turn a deaf ear to the argument that the weakness of the corporate state derives precisely from the *political process* through which key economic decisions are made. Reich has no use for the free market, dismissing it as the stuff of wild cowboy capitalism. He sees the tentacles of Big Government and concentrated economic power everywhere, and his object is simply to make this economic concentration more efficient. But the issue of economic freedom notwithstanding, Reich has marshalled no evidence that the political settlements he proposes would in any way benefit the economic needs of Americans.

Consider his understanding of the Japanese economy. In advocating a corporate state for the United States, Reich (along with Lester Thurow) has become a major proponent of a new "yellow peril" argument. The old yellow peril argument had it that the U.S. economy was endangered by cheap Oriental labor. The neoliberal version sees our economy threatened by high quality corporate state labor in Japan—i.e., "Japan Inc." According to Reich and Thurow, to beat the Japanese, we must become more like them. This means importing not so much Japanese autos, TVs, and steel, as it does the corporate state.

There are several problems with this new "yellow-peril" argument. First, the U.S. economy has not performed nearly as badly *vis à vis* the Japanese as Reich would have us believe. Herbert Stein points out in his *Fortune* magazine review of Reich's book that "between 1960 and 1979 Japanese real per capita output rose from 31.5% of ours to 70.2% of ours. But the rate of gain on us fell sharply. If it continues to fall at the same pace, Japan's real per capita GNP would still be only 74% of ours in 2083." As a matter of fact, the seventies have been sick for all the Western industrialized countries and not just the United States.

Table 1 indicates the average annual growth rates of real gross domestic production for selected industrial countries during the periods 1960-70 and 1970-80. Interestingly enough, though Reich never tires of badmouthing U.S. economic performance relative to Japan and West Germany, the decrease from the sixties to the seven-

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ties was less in the U.S. (-30.2%) than in either Japan (-54.1%) or West Germany (-40%). And recently (1980-82), this trend has become even more pronounced.

Second, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and the corporate state behind it have hardly been the source of Japan's economic success. There continues to be tremendous competition in the domestic Japanese market, the survivors often going on to become major exporters. MITI has been far from invincible; in cases of Japanese export success, the informed consensus now is that MITI has followed more than it has led. University of California economist William Ouchi claims "the Japanese are successful because their government doesn't get as directly involved in policy making as ours does in the U.S." Finally, so as not to disappoint the supply-siders, the ratio of taxes to GNP in Japan is the lowest of the industrialized powers.

Rather than Japan, the country that truly has adopted the corporate model is Sweden. Reich should look more closely at Sweden, its economic system, and its economic and social problems. Roland Huntford writes in *The New Totalitarians,* "Like Fascist Italy, Sweden today is a corporate state, but the Swedish version of the corporate state is far more complete than the Italian one. Corporatism sat uneasily on the Italians, with their individualistic tradition, and it only affected the country superficially; in Sweden, it has permeated all corners of national life."

The Swedish corporate state with such features as worker-managed firms, high taxes, government incentives to prevent business from moving in view of alleged social costs to workers and communities, and extensive government retraining programs is closer to what Reich has in mind for America than anything that has taken place in Japan. Had Reich bothered to look at the record of Sweden for the 1970s, not to mention other Northern European social democracies, he would have discovered that their troubles have been much greater than ours (see Table 1). Reich's championing of social democratic economic institutions might have been convincing twenty years ago. Today it is nonsense.

Indeed, it can be argued that the sick seventies in all the industrialized countries were caused by the very welfare-corporative policies that Reich advocates. Sweden did worst in the seventies because it went furthest in a corporate direction. The United States did much better because it lagged behind. Walter Mondale's crowd-pleasing orations notwithstanding, Ronald Reagan's charge that fascism—its economic theory—was the basis of the New Deal is essentially correct. Given the economic recovery presently taking place under the Administration's auspices, Democratic visions of the government's economic role will not prove very popular. As the electorate will realize, the neoliberal call for a new "industrial policy" is a call to catch up with the losers. □

TABLE I

Average Annual Growth Rates of Real Gross Domestic Product, Selected Industrialized Countries

	1960-70	1970-80
United States	4.3%	3.0%
United Kingdom	2.9%	1.9%
Japan	10.9%	5.0%
France	5.5%	3.5%
West Germany	4.4%	2.6%
Sweden	4.4%	1.7%

Source: *World Development Report, 1982.* World Bank.

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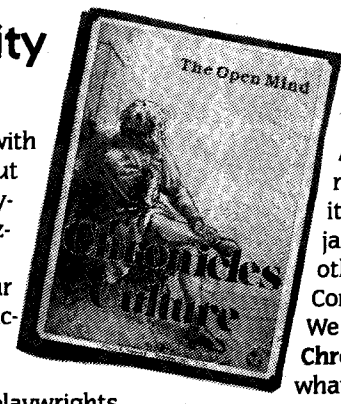

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EUROPEAN DOCUMENT

WEST OF THE WALL

by William McGurn

Berlin, the guidebooks all agree, does not get very hot, but at this conference for German and American journalists the 90-degree heat wave is the major source of complaint. The conference organizers—the American Council of Young Political Leaders, the City of Berlin, Atlantic Bridge, and the U.S. Information Agency—have booked us into a hotel lacking air conditioning and featuring windows of a particularly nasty Teutonic design that makes them virtually impossible to open. On the first evening of the conference, during a dinner with Ambassador Arthur Burns at the Harnack House, U.S. Minister Nelson Ledsky elicits a warm round of applause for his diplomatic suggestion that we dispense with our jackets. But we continue to sweat.

The Harnack House is an intriguing building, formerly the workplace of German scientists like Albert Einstein and now the U.S. Officer's Club. Recently it has been redecorated, in a style one guest described as neo-bordello: heavy maroon carpet and drapes, set off by pink and white. Over cocktails the Germans and Americans exchange jokes about their respective political leaders; the Germans are bemused at the keen interest the Americans display for the Green Party, who despite their two million votes in the last election are considered to be of minor importance.

As might be expected, what most of these journalists have on their minds is missiles: specifically, the Pershing II's scheduled to be deployed on German soil at the end of the year. Ambassador Burns has a few strong words concerning Petra Kelly and her Greens, and describes as "hooligans" the five-to-seven hundred demonstrators who made headlines in June by stoning Vice President Bush's car in Krayfeld. A white-haired grandfather figure complete with suspenders and gold-rimmed glasses, the Ambassador fields questions from the reporters. An American journalist, endeavoring to reconcile Burns's statements on the missiles with those received from Administration officials in Washington, admits she is confused. The Ambassador is sympathetic. "Talk to some more people," he tells her, "and you'll be more confused still." What the Ambassador does not say is that this is perhaps the nut of the problem: how can there be popular support without popular understanding?

Over on the other side, reaching some 1,209 feet up into the skyline, is the East Berlin TV tower. Built largely with funds exacted from the faithful in the form of a "church tax," the tower is modeled after a similar one back in Mother Moscow. Close to the top is a glass-enclosed sphere called the Telécafé, a revolving restaurant that completes one full turn each hour. After building it the East Germans discovered to their chagrin that on sunny days the light striking the orb produces a giant cross, visible for miles. Locals call it "the Pope's revenge," and rumor has it that the authorities have tried everything they can think of to get rid of it. In Berlin, the metaphors are rarely subtle.

During the course of our program, I am finally introduced to a bona fide Green, the Honorable Uwe Tietz, a member of parliament as well as of the Alternate List Party. Herr Tietz is about 35 years old, charming, and as he informs me a "practicing capitalist" in the Schumacher mold—the proprietor of a small Rent-A-Van concern. To the delight of the Americans, he is even dressed the part: yellow T-shirt, plastic sandals, and a striped sports jacket that more closely resembles a pajama top. Unlike most of his fellow Greens, however, Herr Tietz is a born and bred Berliner.

From our conversation, rendered comprehensible by the able translation of Stefan Simons of the *Frankfurter Rundschau,* a definite lack of consistency becomes apparent. In fact, aside from making a program out of opposition to everyone else, the Greens have no real plans. In response to my query as to whether he is against all nuclear weapons or would accept *German* nuclear weapons, he says, yes, he could accept German nuclear arms. He asks me if I believe in that. I tell him that *I* believe what he is saying—but am not sure *he* believes what he is saying. There is a pause, for translation. Then he laughs. "Perhaps you are right," he tells me.

Later that night, most of the journalists decide to take advantage of the German beer and the evening breeze by parking themselves at some outdoor cafe. Even as late as one or two a.m. the Kurfürstendamm —Berlin's main drag—is still hopping. I order an *orangesaft,* and am ripped off for 8 deutschemarks ($3.50). Not far up the block, a topless dancer beckons from the red-lit doorway of a seedy cabaret. A German asks me about Will Rogers, and after a day of INF discussions I yield to an overwhelming temptation. "A well-known Communist radio commentator of the 30s," I say, seriously. High overhead, the revolving blue-and-white Mercedes-Benz symbol dominates the dark sky, a beacon of capitalist light: another blunt metaphor, like the Wall.

In the end, of course, everything comes back to the Wall.

Over its 22 years of existence the only changes have served to make it both technologically and psychologically more forbidding. Even at inherently scenic scapes like the Glienicke Bridge—where Francis Gary Powers was exchanged for Colonel Rudolf Abel back in 1962—the Marxist propensity for the crass asserts itself. The result here is a snapshot so close to parody that any grade-B Hollywood set designer who attempted to duplicate it would be laughed out of his job. Divided by a white line smack in the middle, the steel bridge features a Western half freshly painted, neatly paved, and with boatloads of happy West Berliners cruising by underneath. The East Berlin side sports a faded, peeling coat of light green paint spotted with pigeon droppings, weeds sprouting all along its crumbling roadway. Those of us who venture out toward the line have our photographs taken by East German soldiers guarding the "anti-fascist barriers" on their side.

I told you it wasn't subtle. Nevertheless, to suggest that the shamefully blatant crudeness of the Soviet presence only intimidates the Germans would be a mistake. Rather, this seems to bolster the Germans' sense of *superiority* to the Russians, reaffirming the feeling that they better than the Americans know how to handle Moscow. As the *Spectator*'s precipient managing editor reported in these pages a year ago,* the Germans are firmly committed to détente—at almost any cost. In practical terms, Ostpolitik means that some 80 percent of the East German population regularly sees the West German population, and families and

William McGurn is assistant managing editor of The American Spectator.

*Wladyslaw Pleszczynski, "A Separate Peace," *TAS,* August 1982.

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friends on both sides of the border appreciate its small but real benefits. Given this, the decision of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's conservative government to guarantee almost $400 million worth of private loans to the East (the first loan with no strings attached) is not at all earth-shattering. It's just the cost of doing business.

What all sides know is that Germany, the first site of any East-West conflict, is the key to Europe's future. What they don't know is what that future will be. At the moment, U.S. officials, even while celebrating the 300th anniversary of Germans in America, worry over the "new generation" of Europeans who have no memories of the Second World War. For this majority of Europeans, reared in peace and affluence, Berlin before the Wall does not exist and America is more likely to be remembered for Vietnam than for the Marshall Plan. "You may think me naive," Herr Tietz told me, "but I do not want my peace to have to depend on how many missiles I have on my side of the line." These words are from a Berliner, inside the Reichstag, with a view of the Wall quite literally over our shoulders. □

THE GREAT AMERICAN SALOON SERIES

BIG STASH'S

by Joe Mysak

Gus: *Don't go about it the wrong way. Don't use the Democrats' approach. Don't throw money at it.*

Tom: *Forget it. What's the use? She'll never go out with me—I mean on a date.*

Gus: *Really cute, eh?*

Tom: *Oh, perfect. About so high, likes sports, yet an intellectual, a real intellectual. With all that, the kind of girl who blushes the first time you meet her. Murderous blue eyes, and this great hair, so blonde it's greenish, you know.*

Gus: *Sounds your type.*

Tom: *It doesn't make a difference. Her old man is loaded. Every time I talk to her it's like looking over a hedge at this incredible Brueghelesque scene, filled with people with tons of money. I mean, I can't believe it, it's hilarious. I ask her about what she's going to do on the weekend, and she talks about tennis, shooting, sailing—My God, her father owns a 54-foot sailboat. On the scale of money, this guy has Money That Buys Things. She's first class. Out of my league. Way over my head.*

Gus: *Not the kind of girl you'd take to Big Stash's.*

Oh, yes, Big Stash's, site of first loves, first beers, first real drinking bouts; for some of us, the first restaurant we ever went to. The place took us through high school, college years, and even now serves as the capper to a night's real work at Frenchy's, that other famous Union County saloon, previously described in these pages.* Big Stash's: home of fabled, thick pea soup; Pabst on tap; kielbasi and kraut; huge overstuffed sandwiches. Big Stash's: a piece of pure Jerseyana unchanged since the 1950s, a saloon and restaurant that has even given its name to a concept, as in a line first uttered in Mr. Bierals's first-period algebra class, about a kid who has since gone into politics: "My God, is he stash."

Stash had as much to do with personal style as it does with the place. As I recall, it had to do with formica-topped tables, carpet dusty with sand from The Shore, plastic pitchers of beer, and polyester leisure suits. It had something to do with pictures of Authentic Slavic Dances on the walls, fat men in Hawaiian shirts, and beehive bubble hairdos; it had something to do with being on the prom committee, slick pompadours, driving your parents' Pontiac, and being the kind of guy who would wear a corduroy sports jacket into the 21 Club—and not on a dare, either. It had something to do with cafeteria-style steam tables, and whether or not you worried about the unwritten rules.

I said the place has not changed since the 1950s. This is not exactly true; just a few years ago Stash added banquet rooms for weddings and doubled the size of the bar, paneling parts of it with smoky, gold-veined mirror, the kind called Venetian and apparently standard issue for all homes on Staten Island. Nevertheless, Big Stash's remains substantially unchanged.

Psychiatrists and other such charlatans, I suppose, would say that Stash's represents something we all fear, a reminder of just how fragile the veneer is. They might see in it a perfect symbol of the middle-class quicksand we are desperately trying to escape, of all the little polyester things we are ashamed of, and try to hide or deny, usually to no avail. Our entire lives are dark secrets: "Hey, I'm cool, I went to an Ivy League school, I'm okay, really, no big deal," we say to rich girls, and of course it all is a big deal.

More dispassionate observers, of course, would just say that Big Stash's is a damned fine saloon and restaurant, and leave it at that; the best kind of place to bring your wedding party after a tuxedo-sizing, the kind of place to discuss current affairs, politics, softball, and the old days, like the time the nuns taught the glee club "The Ballad of the Green Berets," which went on to become the hit of our grammar-school Christmas Assembly, just behind "How Much Is That Doggy In The Window?"

Big Stash's is on South Wood Avenue in Linden, just down a ways from Tucky's Pizza and the live poultry store with the Rhode Island Reds and other such gobblers in the windows, just across from U.S. Routes 1 & 9, now at what must be their most scenic, what with softball players dodging oil tankers and semis to field balls hit out of Wheeler Park. It is cheek by jowl with the largest refinery on the East Coast and its tank farm, part of which blows every few years, knocking out windows for miles around, sending bystanders running for cover, and causing mothers to soothe their tender babes with "There, there, it's only one or two of the tanks." It is about two miles from the Tremley Point saloons which are really nothing more than neon beer signs in people's living-room windows, and maybe a mile from the field where Parker Bagley hit a softball 350 feet over the center-field fence and into the tank farm back in 1979. □

Joe Mysak is assistant managing editor of the Daily Bond Buyer.

*"Frenchy's of Roselle Park," *TAS,* May 1980.

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BOOK REVIEWS

ON HISTORY AND OTHER ESSAYS

Michael Oakeshott / Barnes & Noble Books / $25.75

Kenneth Minogue

Michael Oakeshott's new collection of essays comes out fifty years after his first work, *Experience and its Modes.* As a Cambridge don back in the 1930s, he seemed to some an elegant echo of the British idealists. But it was a period of dreadful tedium in political thought, and Oakeshott soon commanded attention as a highly distinctive thinker deeply engaged in the philosophical understanding of modernity as a special type of response to the human condition. After 1945, when he was editing the *Cambridge Journal,* he wrote an influential set of essays criticizing an almost ubiquitous intellectual tendency which he called "rationalism," and which could be discerned in the attempt of social-democratic regimes (such as the Attlee government in Britain) to determine human happiness by legislative fiat and bureaucratic regulation. In this phase of his thought, he was widely regarded as a conservative political philosopher, an expression Oakeshott himself would regard as incoherent. In 1951, he was appointed to the chair of political science at the London School of Economics which had previously been held by the well-known socialist Harold Laski, and his inaugural lecture skeptically repudiating the idea that the activity of politics could be built upon firm scientific or philosophical foundations was a famous caesura in the development of the subject. Much of what he then had to say about political activity (some of it published in *Rationalism in Politics,* 1962) had evident affinities with Burke's criticism of the French revolutionaries. The big difference was that, whereas Burke was a man of faith, Oakeshott was one of doubt. This skeptical side of his thought has always cut across the political enthusiasms of the modern world.

The positive side is less easy to grasp, even though Oakeshott's intellectual life has exhibited a remarkable vocation to think, and rethink, and then to think through again, the conceptual questions that arise when we try to understand politics in philosophical terms. He has always had a special affinity for Hobbes, because of a shared concern about the character of a modern state, and also what one might call a shared sense of the rules of the philosophical game. Hobbes was evidently fascinated by the many puzzling features of the form of government emerging in his time, and he attempted to construct the essentials of this state out of the most parsimonious materials: merely human beings, construed as if they were complex machines, with appetites and aversions. Hobbes dispensed with natural sociability, superiorities by nature, subjection to God, inner moral senses, and all the other familiar bits of apparatus which philosophers sometimes employed to make their problem easier of solution. Oakeshott has this same disposition, and his pertinent comments on Hobbes may be seen in the collection of his writings called *Hobbes on Civil Association.* Oakeshott's own full-length treatment of this subject was *On Human Conduct* (1975). Like Hobbes, Oakeshott began far out: by considering the distinctive nature of human moral agency. Meanwhile during these later years, he had been rethinking many of the questions dealt with in his earlier writings. During the 1960s and 1970s, papers were given (and perpetually changed and modified) each year at a graduate seminar at L.S.E. *On History and Other Essays* is the fruit of this later thought.

History had featured, in *Experience and its Modes,* as an "arrest" of human thought in a certain mode of abstraction, having its own presuppositions and a limited coherence. In a later essay, he had argued for history as a pure involvement with constructing past events, completely disengaged from the excitements of contemporary commitment. In these new essays, his problem begins from the fact that actual books of history are remarkably miscellaneous bodies of thought, incorporating factual statements, moral judgments, bits of generalization, verdicts, and much else. This miscellaneous character is perhaps inevitable as a matter of practice, but the philosopher remains interested in trying to discover a specifiable type of understanding which is, as it were, pure history. It is obvious that many of the works a librarian would put on the history shelf are really political arguments, exercises in nostalgia, or perhaps the creation of elevated intellectual pedigrees for contemporary intellectual trends. Can one discover, amid this miscellany, a definable concern with the past whose point is *purely* to understand what the surviving records reveal about that past?

Oakeshott does in fact think this possible, and the three essays in history here presented record the process of analysis by which a past clearly distinguished from the mere use of the past tense begins to emerge. Above all, the historical past must be distinguished from the living "past," which he thinks is hardly past at all:

> It is the present contents of a vast storehouse into which time continuously empties the lives, the utterances, the achievements and the sufferings of mankind. As they pour in, these items undergo a process of detachment, shrinkage and desiccation which the less interesting of them withstand. . . . Here are Cain and Abel, Moses, Horatius, Caesar crossing the Rubicon, Athanasius at Nicea, Canute on the seashore, King Arthur, Wilhelm Tell, Luther at Worms, Nelson putting the telescope to his blind eye at Copenhagen . . .

History is thus specified as a form of understanding which arises only when questions about those things around us which are recognized for this purpose as survivals from an earlier time are examined, and subjected to a sequence of questions of a particular kind. Nothing can emerge from this particular sort of inquiry except a passage of human experience understood, in terms of its circumstances, as a special kind of event. It must constitute an account of human life in which *everything* is circumstantially changing over time. Such change cannot be teleological, or law-governed, or miraculous, not because the historian denies the possibility of such types of change, but because Oakeshott's problem is to isolate a genuinely historical

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understanding from the covertly causal and scientific manners of speaking which are often employed in the expositions of actual historians.

The same technique of burrowing into a practice in order to elicit a pattern of postulates which together compose an ideal activity or relationship is found in the long essay in which Oakeshott attempts to define what can be meant by the idea called "the rule of law." His aim here is to elicit and distinguish a specific mode of association between individual human beings which is purely one of subscription to a set of laws. What is it, one might ask, which all citizens of the United States have in common? Not beliefs, certainly; nor even a common patriotism. They do not all speak the same language, nor is there any common good which they all pursue. A plausible answer is to see them as constituting an association merely because they are all subject to the laws of the United States, and many of their practices (especially in relation to the courts and due process) would support this view. Oakeshott seeks to elicit what is involved in this mode of association, which he insists, toward the end of the essay, is altogether too abstract to constitute, by itself, an account of even a possible, much less an actual, modern state.

The essay is typical late Oakeshott. It exhibits nothing of that practical nostalgia for some true community just around the philosophical corner such as has often passionately attracted most political thinkers since Rousseau, including the early Hegel, to whom Oakeshott is in some respects much indebted. The kind of association we enjoy—Oakeshott had earlier used the more familiar term "individualist"—is treated by him as an intellectual problem to be understood, not as a practical problem to be solved. The essay is also typical by virtue of a density of thought which makes the style not, indeed, obscure, but certainly clotted, and lacking the seductive ease of the earlier writings. Those earlier writings were occasionally marked by sudden polemics, the intrusion into a highly abstract argument of some term of intellectual contempt, illuminating the academic terrain like summer lightning. Here too there is the occasional reference to unspecified "moral idiocies," but this is an Oakeshott who has taken on board whatever criticism or bafflement he has earlier induced in his readers, and attempts to deal with it.

Any concern with bread and butter academic controversy, however, is usually implicit. The common academic manner of writing takes off from problems left behind by earlier thinkers and, signposting these coordinates abundantly, leaves in its wake further trailing problems to which others can attach themselves, rather like those strings of chemical entities which are the clue to life. Oakeshott by contrast takes a problem and attempts to think it right through in terms of the scale within which he is working, a procedure which makes it difficult to discover a point of critical entry and conveys to some more conventional philosophical readers the impression that there is no argument at all.

The details of the mode of association which Oakeshott calls the rule of law are much too complex for simple summary. But one may say that the rule of law must be distinguished from such other forms of human association as partnership, competition, and gaming. It is an association of *personae* (abstractions, not concrete human beings) who choose whatever acts they wish to do, but in doing whatever they do, recognize an obligation to subscribe to certain "adverbial conditions" which are contained in the "non-instrumental rules" which constitute the law.

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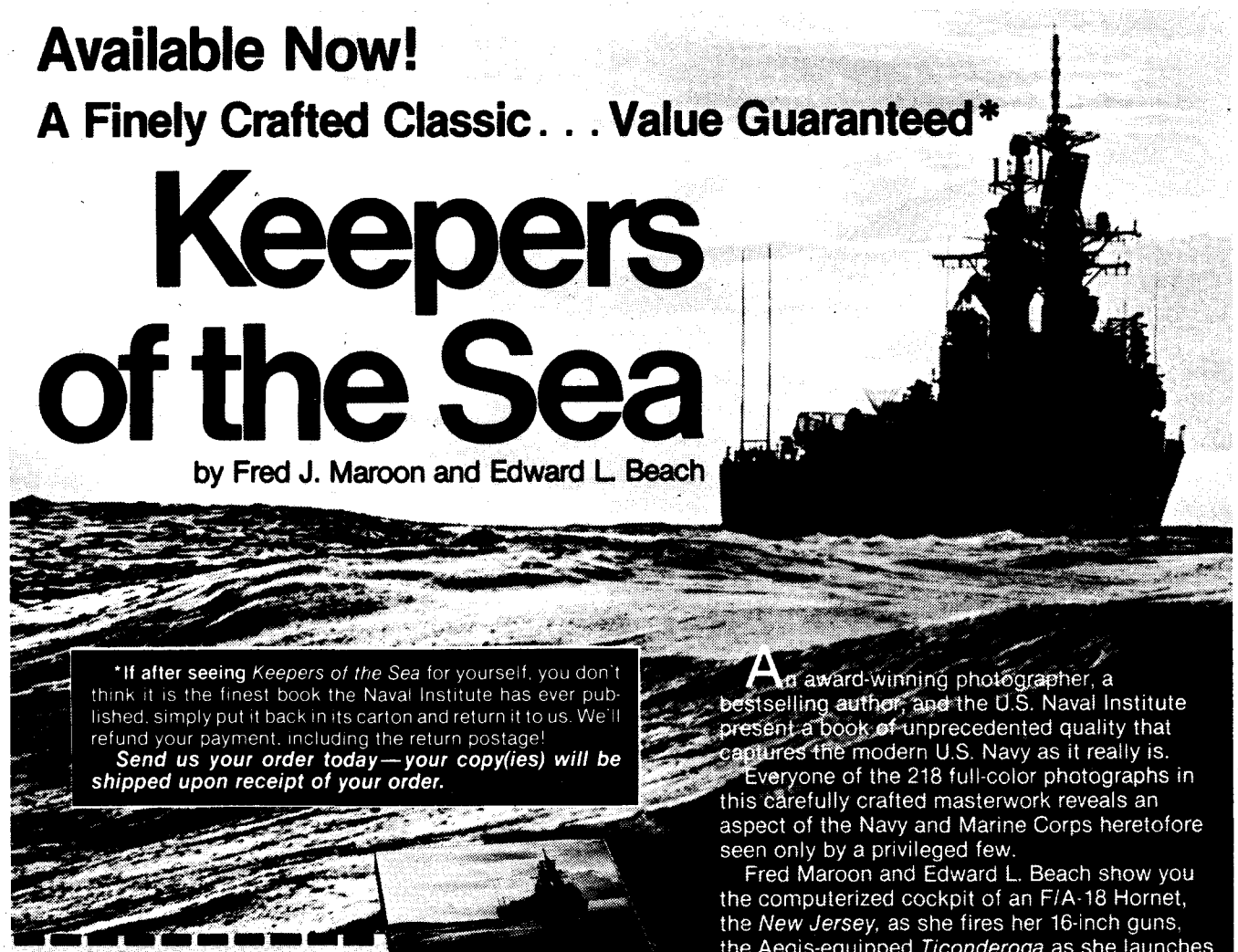

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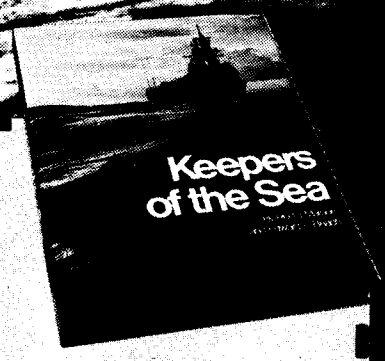

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Oakeshott is very clear that many sorts of rule, and many of the things currently recognized as laws, are explicitly instruments for the attainment of some common end. What he excludes from the rule of law is clearer than what he includes, and this particular reader would have been grateful for some further discussion of the idea of a "non-instrumental rule." Such things would seem at least to include the sort of law which Herbert Hart has discussed as performing the function of enabling people to do things otherwise impossible—such as make contracts, wills, or marriages. Among the central preoccupations of Oakeshott's argument is a rejection of the contemporary propensity to confuse the authenticity of a law with its desirability—that impatient lust for imagined goods which makes our contemporaries intolerant of any forms and procedures which frustrate their immediate desires.

Finally, an intellectual bonbon called "The Tower of Babel," an essay and a story not to be confused with one of the same title published in *Rationalism in Politics.* From Nimrod in the Old Testament to Pol Pot in modern Cambodia, history has yielded a long succession of titans seeking (as Oakeshott put it in that earlier essay) "perfection as the crow flies." A recognition of such an overweening pride, individual and collective, of the common refusal to accept the terms of the human condition, has provoked many stories and legends in the cultures of the world, and the first part of the essay is a discussion of the character of such stories. The essay ends with the satirical tale of a modern Duke Nimrod who inveigled his gullible subjects into one of those giant collective projects in which all the resources of the nation, human and material, were to be mobilized for a seductive end. But the city's "obsession with the bottomless abundance of paradise" destroyed them all and, much later, after the ruins of that enterprise had long been overgrown with purple asphodel and become but objects of archaeological interest, a poetic fragment was discovered, composed by an early Babelian poet, which was deciphered as:

Those who in fields Elysian would dwell
Do but extend the boundaries of hell. □

LEADERS
Richard Nixon / Warner Books / $17.50

Karl O'Lessker

What are Presidents to do after they leave office? In this century, at least, they have written books. Theodore Roosevelt, a skilled and prolific author before he became President, continued to write until his death in 1919. William Howard Taft and Herbert Hoover, to both of whom writing was as natural as posing before a television camera is to today's politicians, produced important works throughout their retirement years. Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson, and Carter all wrote lengthy accounts of their presidential terms and Nixon and Ford wrote full-scale autobiographies. But of this post-World War II group, only Richard Nixon has taken on authorship as a vocation: three books in print and a fourth soon to follow. For a period of less than nine years, that's a record that would put most aspiring professors to shame.

The most recent of Mr. Nixon's books, published late last year, is entitled *Leaders,* and the dust jacket accurately describes it as "profiles and reminiscences of men who have shaped the modern world." It is in many ways his best book (though my personal favorite remains the *Memoirs*), not only because of what it tells us about his subjects but because of what it tells us about himself.

No American President, I think, has been more self-conscious about his role as world and national leader than Mr. Nixon. Throughout his entire public career his watchful second nature, his demon, his *Doppelgänger,* has stuck implacably to his side, never giving him a moment's rest, at least in public, from its merciless running commentary on his every word and gesture. Those of us who have had to live with our own far less vigilant demons know what agonies they can cause—all too often unmerited.

So Mr. Nixon has been nothing if not self-aware. And now he has written a book in which on every page—sometimes consciously, sometimes perhaps not—he not only describes and evaluates a contemporary but measures himself against a pitiless ideal. It is a stunning and unnerving performance. But needless to say, several reviewers have totally misread it, dismissing the author's reflections on leadership as empty posturing. It is hard to know whether so grossly inaccurate a reading owes more to malice or stupidity, though both are surely involved.

The obvious truth is that Mr. Nixon is at least as well aware as his critics of the respects in which his own conduct in office failed to meet the standards set forth so thoughtfully in *Leaders.* Does this make them invalid? On the contrary, I should think. Who, after all, knows better than Richard Nixon the penalty of ignoring them? Who has earned at greater cost the right to distinguish between effective and ineffective action on the part of a national leader? This is by no means to say that Mr. Nixon was peculiarly ineffective as President. Save for the ghastly misadventure of Watergate—which the French rightly perceived from beginning to end as a crazily overblown tempest in a teapot, elevated to the status of high tragedy by a rabble of Nixon-haters in Congress, the bureaucracy, and the media—save for that, the Nixon presidency would certainly have been counted a historic success: all the more so had we been able to envision what would then have been "the road not taken"—a road which, in the catastrophic wake of Mr. Nixon's resignation, has led to the enslavement, death, or exile of tens of millions of people.

The Nixon reflections on leadership thus have the double-domed authority of success as well as failure. But their deeper interest for many readers will lie in what they tell us about the self-image of this most complex and controversial political figure of our time. For example, his admiration, bordering on reverence, for the late Charles de Gaulle tells us as much as anything could about what humanly attainable standards of leadership the author himself aspired to—strikingly and revealingly different from those of his three successors in the Oval Office. And it is worth pointing out to that particular subset of Nixon haters who used to accuse him of suffering from a kind of Gaullist *folie des grandeurs* that one can (and indeed should) aspire to an ideal without in the least imagining oneself to *be* the ideal.

Most of *Leaders* is given over to those "profiles and reminiscences" promised on the dust jacket. They include, in addition to the admirable chapter on de Gaulle, lengthy studies of Winston Churchill, Douglas MacArthur, Shigeru Yoshida, Konrad Adenauer, Nikita Khrushchev, and Chou En-Lai. And there are shorter but no less incisive sketches of China's Mao and Russia's Brezhnev, Nasser and Sadat of Egypt, Ben-Gurion and Meir of Israel, Nehru and Indira Gandhi of India, Italy's de Gasperi, Ghana's Nkrumah, Indonesia's Sukarno, the Philippines' Magsaysay, Singapore's Lee, Australia's Menzies, the Shah of Iran, and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. It is an extraordinary cast of characters and Mr. Nixon knew them all.*

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*The most conspicuous absentee is of course Dwight Eisenhower, whom Mr. Nixon knew more intimately than any of the rest. The only explanation we receive for this omission is the author's comment that he chose "not to include American leaders, except Douglas MacArthur, whose most lasting contribution was his role in the shaping of modern Japan." If that strikes the reader as a not entirely compelling explanation, one can at least hope that in the years to come Mr. Nixon will give us that full-length portrait which he is uniquely qualified to paint.

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In each case, the account consists of a combination of standard biographical material and the author's own personal observations and character analysis. Some of the book's more fatuous reviewers complained about the former—as if Mr. Nixon should have buried himself in the archives of a dozen nations in order to meet some bibliographical standard appropriate to a Ph.D. dissertation. What in fact he does is rely on the best available biographies of each of his subjects in order to provide the general reader with just enough life-and-times information to enable us to put his own observations into perspective. And it is these that make his sketches so valuable: candid snapshots of leaders at work and play, with Mr. Nixon's seasoned judgments on their characters and motives.

Most of them are men whom he admired, but he is equally perceptive about those with whom he disagreed and even disliked: Khrushchev above all, but also Nkrumah and Sukarno. And one senses, too, the effort it cost him to restrain his impatience with Pandit Nehru and his daughter Mrs. Gandhi. It is a measure of Mr. Nixon's success as a portraitist that he manages in each case to give the devils their due. He is as candid and as coolly analytical about their strengths as about their weaknesses.

In addition to its other considerable virtues the book is well written. The former President has developed a clean, straightforward style, generally avoiding rhetoric and occasionally achieving eloquence. And scattered throughout the text are turns of phrase that our most accomplished stylists would be proud to have devised. Two examples: Of Nehru's zeal to create a united India out of that immensely diverse subcontinent, Mr. Nixon says: "Unity is sometimes more important to the unifiers than to the unified." And on the needless suffering imposed on Third World peoples by their flamboyant leaders he notes that "too many people have gone to bed with their ears full but their stomachs empty."

By any standard, then, this is a remarkable and rewarding book, not least because only Richard Nixon could have written it. Others among the West's recent leaders may be his intellectual peers, but it is doubtful that any, save possibly Helmut Schmidt, have a quality of mind that is at once so broadly reflective and icily analytic. One can only regret—and "regret" is too mild a word—that Mr. Nixon throughout his long public career didn't let us see more of this essential core of himself. It is a kind of ferocious irony that the men he has now written about in *Leaders* saw so much more of that in him than did the American people to whom this outstanding book is addressed. The world's leaders almost without exception accorded him immense and well-deserved respect. The American people allowed him to be driven from office by a rabble. Might there not be one additional precept of leadership to be drawn from this melancholy contrast that Mr. Nixon might want to include in his next book? □

THE HOMOSEXUAL NETWORK: PRIVATE LIVES AND PUBLIC POLICY

Enrique T. Rueda / The Devin-Adair Co. / $24.95; $13.95 pbk.

Ernest van den Haag

This collection of data on the homosexual movement left me with a divided mind. Although useful, it is far from searching or comprehensive. We learn next to nothing about the social background of homosexuals. We do not learn what proportion is poor or rich, college educated or not, nor what proportion is represented in various segments of the work force. What proportion are teachers? Judges? What proportion works in the fashion industry or in the arts? Votes Democratic or Republican? Neither do we learn how homosexuals are distributed spatially. What proportion lives in big cities or small towns? Such data are hard to come by, I know—but not impossible. There are sampling methods and statistical procedures in which the author shows no interest whatever. Since there is a sizable homosexual movement one wonders why we are not even offered an estimate of the size of the homosexual population. If we are to estimate the dimensions of the homosexual movement—and this book attempts no less—the missing data are indispensable. We are not offered much about homosexual behavior, either. We do not learn what proportion of homosexuals have stable relations with their partners and what proportion are promiscuous. Here again some estimates might have helped.

The book focuses on the political and ideological aspects of the homosexual movement, but, once more, the author confuses anecdotes or, more charitably put, non-quantified data with the quantified ones we need. The one exception are data taken from various polls on the acceptance of homosexuals by the American public. I think these data are basically correct and helpful although they are not sufficient to prove anything much. My belief that the data are correct is based on my intuition and general knowledge: the book does not present us with an analysis of the data enabling us to make an estimate of trustworthiness or significance.

When it comes to the homosexual ideology Father Rueda has assembled a lot of useful material though again he has made little attempt to analyze it. One instance of the lack of critical analysis will do. "Antihomosexual" would be an intelligible term to describe people hostile to homosexuals. But apparently it is not pompous enough. So, homosexual spokesmen coined "homophobic." Father Rueda uncritically uses this word to mean antihomosexual. So do homosexuals. But homophobic actually means fearful of, or hostile to, the same kind, in the context, to the same sex, or to the same sexual inclination. Hence a homophobic heterosexual man (or woman) hates other heterosexual men (or women) but not homosexuals. There is no reason and indeed no excuse for Father Rueda to accept this ignorant coinage which has become part of the homosexual ideology he set out to analyze critically.

Well, in fairness, it should be said that this is the only attempt I know of to depict comprehensively the homosexual network. I wish it were better but at any rate it is a beginning. It may be noted, finally, that the book is particularly strong in its depiction of the relationship of some errant religious, particularly Catholic, groups, with the homosexual movement. In respect to this matter I learned more than I would have liked. I also learned more than I thought possible about the amazing amount of government financial support for the homosexual movement. Thus, despite its lacunae, the book repays study for those interested in the extension of the homosexual network into our various institutions. □

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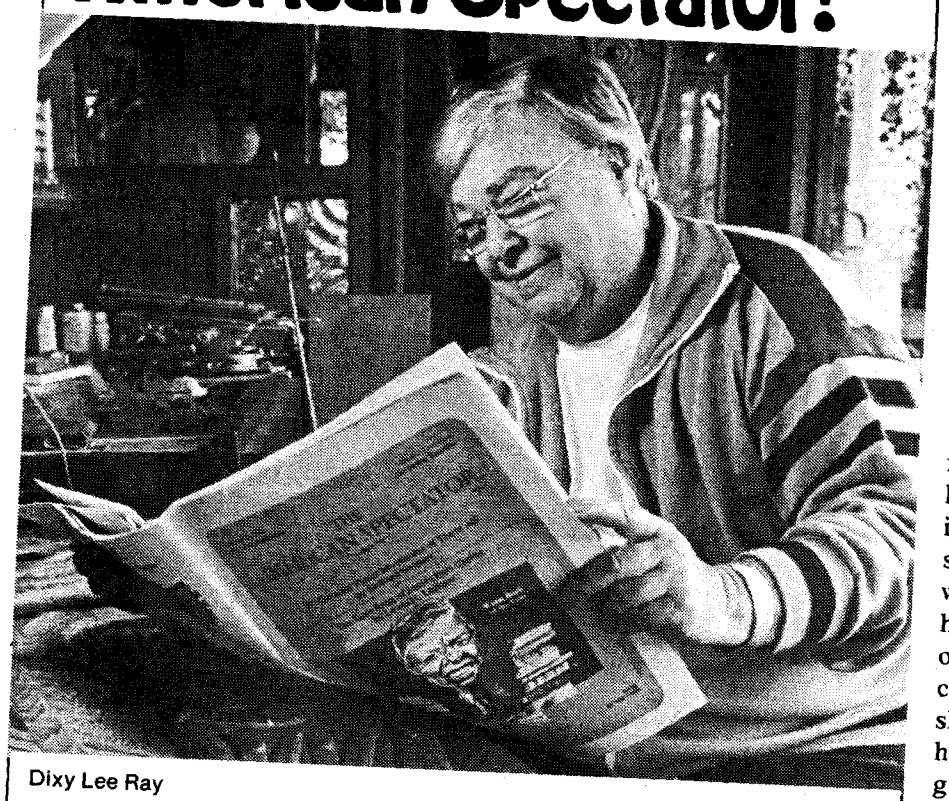

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U.S.S.R. IN CRISIS: THE FAILURE OF AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Marshall I. Goldman / W.W. Norton / $15.00

Walter D. Connor

Everyone who's been there remembers his encounters with the Soviet economy. Once, in a Leningrad bookstore, I asked the rather hard-faced young counter woman if she had any books on criminology (spying, right over head, a top shelf full of such). "*Nyet,*" came the answer, without a bat of her eyes, a turn of her head, or an inquiry to any of the other ostensibly underemployed clerks. When I pointed out the full shelf, the stare hardened—clearly, I had violated the meta-rules of the game played between retailer and purchaser.

In a restaurant in Yalta, which offered "fresh cucumber salad," and "fresh cucumber and tomato salad," I ordered the former—to be told, again, "nyet," not that day (Soviet restaurant menus are more a record of hopes than an indication of what's in the kitchen). Having already slipped a few notches along on a "nativization" scale in the several months I had been living in the USSR, I asked for cucumber and tomato salad. "Da"—and it arrived, after the "appropriate" pause during which adepts of eating out in the USSR turn to their vodka or the book they brought to kill the time.

In another type of communal catering, Soviet farmers regularly feed store-bought bread to their pigs. It's cheaper, and has been for a long time, than a grain mash—the state pays more for one loaf's worth of grain than it charges for the baked loaf. (A considerable disincentive to home baking—but then, such is discouraged in any case. A newspaper in Soviet Armenia complained that too many people were baking bread at home, then selling it to regular customers; even delivering it. Sales, at presumably market-clearing prices, were estimated *greater* than the output of state bakeries; all at no wage or overhead cost. Now, in an admittedly deficient service sector, this might have been welcomed as some taking up of slack by citizen initiative: but not so. The conclusion drawn, instead, was that the Armenian state baking trust could do with more ovens, more capacity, to produce more bread at loss-making retail prices.)

Marshall Goldman knows all about this stuff, and has written about it well and intelligently for many years—an economist with the ability to communicate with that majority of us whose talents and education are in other fields. *USSR in Crisis* is a serious book, a treatment of the built-in peculiarities of an economy which produces not only the sort of vignettes described, but also a bristling military establishment, its only consistent success story. In civilian industry and agriculture, in the investment/consumption balance, in the procurement and deployment of manpower, and in the tension between sometimes-expressed recognition of a need for reform, and the political fears and inertia which work so strongly against meeting that need, the Soviet economy is wracked with problems. Andropov's inheritance is not altogether a happy one. And, given that he comes to power a decade older than Brezhnev at *his* accession in 1964, his chances of accomplishing—should he wish—any radical turnabout before the next succession seem slight.

Twenty years and more of an approach-avoidance minuet with economic reform have left Soviet industry still operating heavily under rules that reward gross production, not quality or end utility. In some areas, "gross" means *weight*: "unit pricing . . . is spelled out in tons or kilograms . . . the heavier the product . . . the quicker the firm will . . . fulfill its plan and collect a bonus. No wonder the Soviet Union has trouble with miniaturization," notes Goldman. Think, too, of shoe manufacture aimed at fulfilling central directives rather than meeting market demand: if total tonnage

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is the target, it is easier to make fewer pairs of *big* shoes; if the number of pairs is the objective, one makes lots of small ones—in a country where, as elsewhere, the *main demand is for average shoes to* fit average feet.

The USSR is rich in energy, but also consumes it voraciously. It needs to drill, to explore—and rewards its prospectors piece-rate, according to the number of meters drilled. But drilling goes harder and slower as one drills deeper, with more chance of cracks and breakage in pipe and bits. With meters rather than discovery the success indicator, "drillers quickly concluded that they should drill only shallow holes" and lots of them.

Agriculture remains, as always, a massive problem—rooted in soil and climate problems but exacerbated beyond the imagination of pre-revolutionary visionaries by the insane collective system imposed by Stalin and preserved with few modifications by his successors. More than one person in five works in agriculture, compared to less than three in a hundred in the U.S.—and the USSR is perennially food (especially meat) short. The simulation of labor continues in the collective sector ("we pretend to work, and they pretend to pay us"), while on the private plots (4 percent of the arable land) work *does* produce: 60 percent of the potatoes, 30 percent of meat, milk, and vegetables. All this without mechanization, without much save labor invested in the expectation of a fair price in the free markets where peasants may sell their own produce —and certainly without much state encouragement. Tolerance, yes—for where would the country be without this production?—but also apprehension about the political consequences of private enterprise getting out of hand, and an unconfessed but real suspicion that the results of private husbandry point up the futility of expecting much more out of a collective sector seemingly engineered by minds with an aversion to a full dinner plate.

Unlike previous leaders, Brezhnev *did* try to solve agriculture's problems—not only by importing what his subjects could not produce, but by throwing money at those problems. Of the one-fourth of all investment funds thrown this way in his last decade, little stuck, and most of that in the wrong places. Money went to constructing massive storage facilities, to alleviate the longstanding wastage between field and consumer. But concentrated complexes of silos and warehouses, depots and meat-lockers, a planner's dream, gave little payoff when farm trucks were so often out of commission, and hard-surface roads in any case absent in the countryside. The giant warehouses absorbed more funds than food; grain and potatoes rotted at the farms; while the unpaved rural roads alternated between the dust and potholes of summer and the mud of spring and fall.

This list of woes should—and rightly so—warm the hearts of free enterprise advocates, even as they sympathize with the hapless Soviet man in the street. The systemic illogic, compounded by inertia, has produced a mess. But then, why not change? Why not reform, decentralize, tap individual energies and greed in the face of this sorry situation? Surely Brezhnev, to say nothing of Andropov, maintained a machinery of repression and control big enough to "contain" the overspill of quasi-liberty that would come from a partial unleashing of Soviet managers, workers, and peasants to work as they willed. And, unlike the Poles, the Soviet population has been docile, enduring a great deal. Yet

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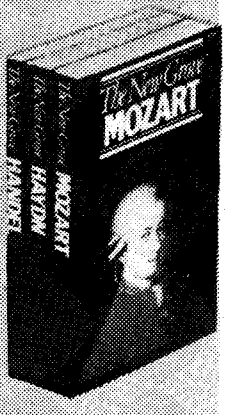

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there are reasons why reform in any significant measure has been rejected, why the Andropov regime will experience a pull toward well-worn furrows, why the measures announced on July 26 seem more an echo of the Kosygin reforms of 1965 than any advance beyond them. Across-the-board decentralization and marketization would leave producers unsure what to produce, scrambling for supplies and customers who found themselves in an unprecedented and fluid situation. Inflationary pressures now suppressed in a "rationing-by-shortage" system would burst through as rubles emerged from savings banks and mattresses in huge quantity, unemployment would burgeon as factories let go the "slackers, idlers, drifters, drunks and absentees" who were this past winter's targets of Andropov's police. In the short run, reforming a system like the Soviet is immensely hard; the short run would not be very short.

Even allowing a longish period of adjustment, whether the USSR could reap the benefits of a reform program in the way Hungary, for example, has is doubtful. *Some* Hungarians, Poles, Czechs can remember market economies and how they work, but such is not the case in the state that was first on the socialist path.

If this is not enough—and it surely is—Andropov and Co. also can be assumed to understand that much of the vast bureaucratic pyramid whose pinnacle they inhabit has no rationale for existence save to run the bureaucratic economy—and that they themselves have no rationale apart from that pyramid. Insulated via special stores and perks, the planners, checkers, counters, "union" officials, and managers must in turn support those leaders who have, thus far, never willed to grasp the nettle of reform. Further, the USSR is no Hungary—a compact, homogeneous collection of ten million souls—but an imperial power. Economic decentralization raises in Moscow the fear of losing control of the internal multiethnic empire (from Catholic Lithuanians to Muslim Uzbeks, and others numbering nearly 270 million stretched across eleven time zones, from desert to permafrost) *and* legitimating more experimentation than is bearable among those always puzzling Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, and other ingrates in the external empire. The imperial burden is heavy, and in the Soviet case it costs the citizens of the metropolitan power a living standard lower than that enjoyed by most of the colonials.

This, then, is a limping economy, but a *big* one; a laggard, but not a basket case. Making a priority of "defense" over all else, successive oligarchies have created from it a military establishment, an arsenal which staggers the imagination and whose significance can be measured only when set against Western reluctance to invest proportionally from our richer economies in our own defense. Our reluctance to match the Soviet buildup has created malaise, suspicion, and fear that the Soviets are so far ahead that catchup is impossible. As Goldman concludes: "The determination of the Reagan administration to counter these trends by increasing the spending in both the United States and the rest of the world is an attempt to halt this apparent and real shift in relative power before it is indeed too late. To do this, however, requires a deemphasis on consumerism and a willingness to increase the power of the military—a difficult task in a democratic and unplanned society."

Difficult, indeed. The critical question now is whether the USSR, no longer anyone's cultural or economic "model," will use what it *has* (power and its threat) to take what it cannot make, will rely even more on the means of compulsion to make good the failure of its means of production. □

THE THREAT: INSIDE THE SOVIET MILITARY MACHINE

Andrew Cockburn / Random House / $16.95

Francis Fukuyama

All thoughtful analysts of the Soviet military are well aware that the Soviet threat is at times exaggerated for political purposes, and that complicated issues are treated simplistically. There are many reasons for taking a balanced view of Moscow's capabilities. For one thing, an awareness of Soviet weaknesses and vulnerabilities allows us to plan policies which exploit them and yield the greatest return on a given political or military investment. Static "bean counts" of weapons inventories hide the complex realities of actual combat and fail to take into account the all-important human element in war. Overemphasis on the threat can be counterproductive: the current administration's rhetoric about the Soviets has not stopped and may even have contributed in some measure to the unraveling of the national consensus for a stronger defense that existed when it came into office.

Andrew Cockburn's book *The Threat* presents the case that Soviet military power has been vastly overrated by the West, and that American attempts to redress the balance are both wasteful and dangerous. *The Threat* obviously reflects considerable research into various aspects of the Soviet military. The author has, for example, interviewed recent Soviet émigrés who have served in the Soviet military. He presents considerable anecdotal evidence about racial tensions between Slavs and Central Asians in the Army, accidents and discipline problems in the Navy, and soldiers who go blind drinking the hydraulic fluid out of their airplanes.

Much of this is interesting and represents an inadequately pursued line of inquiry. Unfortunately, this mass of information is subordinated to the sole purpose of denigrating every aspect of Soviet power—a purpose, I suspect, the author had formulated long before he knew what a T-72 tank was. His unremitting single-mindedness and pretzel-like twisting of arguments and facts are breathtaking and frequently laughable.

In *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious,* Sigmund Freud cites the following story: "A. borrowed a copper kettle from B. and after he had returned it was sued by B. because the kettle now had a big hole in it which made it unusable. His defence was : 'First, I never borrowed the kettle from B. at all; secondly, the kettle had a hole in it already when I got it from him; and thirdly, I gave him back the kettle undamaged.'" (Freud, incidentally, comments that while this may not be a joke, it is a piece of sophistry.) Cockburn, in his eagerness to deflate the Soviet threat, adduces a number of similar arguments. Take the example of air defense weapons. Cockburn correctly notes that during the 1973 Yom Kippur War only one-third of the aircraft lost by Israel were downed by surface-to-air missiles, the rest falling victim to simple anti-aircraft guns and other fighters. (This of course neglects the fact that modern Soviet air defenses are an integrated system of overlapping layers of fire, in which high altitude missiles force aircraft to fly low into ground defenses—a mistake made in the book at several places.) Cockburn *then* goes on to argue that the Soviet ZSU-23-4 antiaircraft gun (which in fact accounted for a large proportion of Israeli losses) is an oversophisticated piece of technology whose worthlessness has been demonstrated on the test range. How then were those Israeli A-4s and F-4s shot down? Evidently they fell out of the sky of their own accord, victims no doubt of American gold-plating.

Other examples of Cockburn's peculiar logic abound. For instance, he spends a good deal of time documenting the poor quality of life in the Soviet armed forces, citing low pay, bad food, inadequate health services, and high incidence of alcoholism as evidence that the Soviets will perform poorly on the battlefield. The actual relationship is quite likely to be the reverse: a future war will not be a girls' school outing, and the Russian soldier, whose daily privation merely reflects the lower standard of living of Soviet society as a whole, will be better suited to survive its rigors than an American serviceman who has opted for military service as an alternative to unemployment. There are endless stories from World War II of the unbelievable toughness of individual Soviet soldiers and the miserable quality of their service conditions as they fought their way—often completely drunk—to Berlin.

Cockburn's efforts to run down the Soviet military would be simpler but for his countervailing desire to give the American military no credit for doing things well. Indeed, the book's stated theme is that "there is very little military rationale to be found in any of the activities of

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the superpowers' armed forces." Cockburn therefore devotes much space to an across-the-board criticism of American weapons systems, including areas like tactical airpower or anti-submarine warfare where everyone is agreed we have a substantial lead. In his breezy treatment of the enormously complicated Quantity-Quality debate, Cockburn predictably accepts James Fallows's criticisms of advanced aircraft like the F-15 and F-16, but goes beyond Fallows by arguing that advanced systems are actually less capable than the ones they replace. The pilots who fly these planes, for instance the Israelis operating over Baghdad and Lebanon, would gasp in disbelief.

Cockburn's failure to see a military rationale for these weapons is related to his basic ignorance about military operations, and the book is replete with simple factual errors. For example, he suggests that armored personnel carriers would be better off without roofs; he claims that the E-2C Hawkeye did not play a major role in Lebanon; and that sonar and radar were not crucial in destroying German submarines in World War II. The list could go on. Cockburn's self-assurance in passing judgment on highly technical questions and sneering at the viewpoints and motives of those who don't agree with him would be more becoming were he less manifestly unqualified to pose as an expert. Fallows at least admitted from the outset that he was an amateur.

Now, Cockburn's thesis that threat overestimation drives unnecessary U.S. military spending has some validity, particularly for the late fifties and early sixties when Khrushchev's valiant but ultimately vain efforts to cut back Soviet military spending generally went unrecognized in the West. But the opposite has also occurred: for several years in the mid-to-late sixties the CIA consistently *underestimated* the level of Soviet ICBM procurement. (Cockburn notes this fact, but typically uses it as a basis for attacking the CIA's competence.) Since the non-Vietnam share of U.S. defense spending shrunk steadily in real terms from 1964 until midway through the Carter Administration, Cockburn's point of view is difficult to sustain. A book which treats Soviet weaknesses objectively and deals with qualitative issues remains to be written. As for *The Threat,* it is best summarized by the Soviet pamphlet *Whence the Threat to Peace?,* quoted by Cockburn in a different context: "tendentiously selected and deliberately distorted information about the Armed Forces of the USSR." □

A GENERAL'S LIFE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY BY GENERAL OF THE ARMY OMAR N. BRADLEY

Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair / Simon and Schuster / $19.95

Eliot A. Cohen

Much was expected of General Omar N. Bradley's posthumous memoirs, but, according to some reviewers, not much was delivered. In their view General Bradley revealed himself a man more self-centered and less forgiving than they had hoped. They reported finding bitter sniping at former colleagues instead of modest introspection; a resolute defense of all of his major decisions instead of a generous admission of mistakes committed (particularly in the matter of closing the Falaise gap in the summer of 1944, when tens of thousands of German troops escaped an Allied trap).

This judgment, unfortunately, exaggerates some undeniable failings and wholly misses a number of strengths of this quasi-autobiography. I use "quasi" because the book was actually written not by Bradley but by Clay Blair, an author well versed in the history of World War II. Indeed, one of the first points to note in analyzing General Bradley is that, unlike a number of his contemporaries (Eisenhower and Montgomery in particular), he had little facility for narrative writing, and even less interest in it. His initial memoirs, *A Soldier's Story* published in 1951, were also ghost-written. Blair was brought in in 1979, when General Bradley was 86 years old, but too late. Bradley died before the World War II section was complete. For all that, Blair seems to have done a yeoman job of archival work, including study of all of Bradley's papers; he also had a number of lengthy interviews with the General. There is little reason to think that his rendition of Bradley's autobiography is substantially different, in style or in substance, from what Bradley himself thought.

I should add, however, that the book consists solely of narrative, which might make it hard going for nonspecialists. Unlike some generals' memoirs (Field Marshal Sir William Slim's fascinating *Defeat into Victory,* for example) it contains no reflections on the nature of war or leadership. Nonetheless, one can learn much about Bradley—and about the nature of military leadership at the highest level—from a careful reading of the book.

Omar Bradley has been eclipsed in the popular mind, or at least in the mind of anyone who did not live through World War II, by other military leaders, most notably George S. Patton. Junior officers in the American military often idolize Patton as the American military archetype, even though many of them probably know no more about Bradley than appeared in the movie *Patton* (for which Bradley provided some background material from his World War II memoirs). In that powerful if misleading film Bradley (played by Karl Malden) appears only as a genial duffer, a faithful follower of Patton in North Africa and Sicily and then Patton's commander in Europe, where his main function seems to be to tell Patton that he cannot have any more gasoline.

This postwar romanticization of Patton at the expense of Bradley is both ill-founded and pernicious. Ill-founded, because (as we learn from *A*

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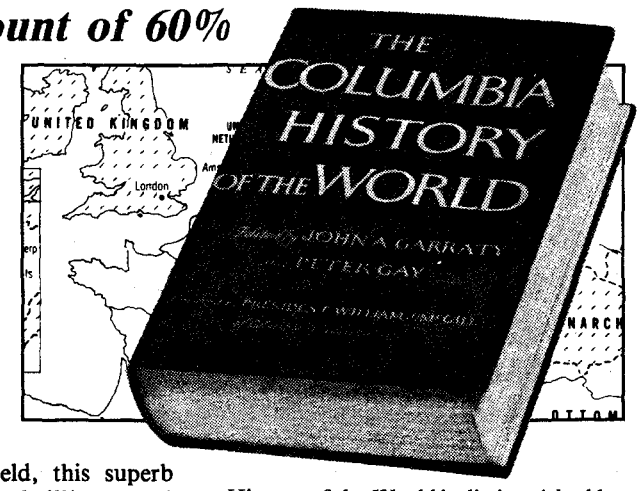

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General's Life and other sources) Patton was an unstable, even hysterical, man as prone to error as to strategic insight; a brilliant leader when pursuing or exploiting a breakthrough, but not an all-around general. Pernicious, because if either the public or the military conceives of Patton as the apotheosis of a military leader we will find ourselves in the hands of men fundamentally unsuited for the myriad political, operational, and logistical requirements of modern war.

Bradley, on the other hand, represents the kind of general Americans should hope to find in wartime. A sound tactician who did not believe in wasting human life to achieve glory (hence his anger at Patton in Sicily), but nonetheless capable of daring conceptions—the massive use of airborne forces at D-Day, the breakout battle in Normandy in August 1944, the encirclement of the Ruhr at the very end of the war. A courteous and pleasant man (Ernie Pyle recorded his astonishment at Bradley's "Thank you" to private soldiers who pulled to the side to let his car pass) but a terribly firm one. Bradley ruthlessly relieved incompetents, including men for whom he felt personal affection. In one instance he demoted to colonel and shipped back to the United States a major general, an old friend who in an unguarded moment let slip that D-Day would occur before 15 June 1944.

As with many great men the key to Bradley's character can be found in his behavior before he rose to prominence. He spent most of his early years teaching, either at West Point, ROTC, or at the Infantry School at Fort Benning. "I was in fact officially a teacher for thirteen of my first twenty-three years of commissioned service. I might add that it is not a bad way to learn your profession thoroughly." Indeed, many contemporaries commented on Bradley's schoolmasterly qualities: patience, comprehensive knowledge, and a capacity to extract effort from subordinates without bullying or mollycoddling them. The chief business of armies—that which occupies or ought to occupy nine tenths of their time, whether in peace or war—is training, and a good military trainer must first be a good teacher.

Consider Bradley's conduct during the winter and spring of 1942. At that time he commanded the newly raised 82nd division, later to become the 82nd Airborne Division, one of the most famous and expert of American infantry units. When Bradley took it over, it was an undifferentiated mass of 16,000 overweight and out of shape draftees, led by a freshly minted cadre of less than 2,000 officers and men stripped from other regular units. Bradley writes:

> I conceived the notion—radical at the time—that we would do everything within our ability to make the draftees feel they were coming to a 'home' where people really cared about their welfare. This is not to say we intended to coddle the recruits. In fact, we intended to be tough as hell on them, but in an intelligent, humane, understanding way.

Brass bands welcomed the troop trains to their training site. The men were then formed up and marched to preassigned tents, "where they found their equipment on a cot with bedding. A hot meal waited in the mess tent. We even instituted rush cleaning and laundry so that the draftees could refurbish travel-stained uniforms." Thereafter Bradley instituted a rugged program of physical training, including calisthenics and obstacle courses in which everyone—even Bradley—had to participate.

In order to strengthen morale Bradley played up the 82nd's famous history in World War I. He invited Sergeant Alvin York (who had won the Congressional Medal of Honor for singlehandedly wiping out a German machine gun nest and capturing 132 men in 1918) to speak to the unit. Needless to say, the visit was a striking psychological success. Characteristically, however, Bradley (who had *not* served overseas during World War I, and had thought his career ruined thereby) made further use of York's visit, quizzing the World War I hero about his exploits in France. York, of course, was well known as a country-raised marksman, and yet:

> One important fact emerged from these talks: most of his effective shooting had been done at very short range—twenty-five to fifty yards. As a result of these talks, I had the staff set up a short-range firing course in the woods with partially concealed cans for targets. The men had to traverse this wooded course, spot the cans and shoot quickly. It was a radical departure from the standard static long-distance firing range.

This may seem a petty incident, but it was not. For one thing, only in the 1960s did the U.S. Army finally field a weapon (the M-16 rifle) that took into account something Bradley had learned before the war, namely, that most infantry engagements take place at very short ranges. For another, only after World War II did the Army move to training with pop-up targets at short ranges. What other two-star general would have thought to question an aging and low-ranking hero about his experiences, and then act on his answers? It was this kind of attention to the details of his business that made Bradley a professional in the fullest sense.

York, incidentally, nonplussed Bradley by telling him "in his candid hill-country way that I would not get very far in this world because I was 'too nice.'" Like many others, York mistook Bradley's quiet courtesy for softness, but a reading of Bradley's accounts of his fellow generals corrects this impression. Although he makes a strenuous effort to be fair to his friends, particularly Eisenhower, he is unsparing in his judgments:

Eisenhower: "Ike was a political general of rare and valuable gifts, but as his African record clearly demonstrates, he did not know how to manage a battlefield."

Patton: "Patton was a superb field general and leader—perhaps our very best—but a man with many human and professional flaws. Those flaws held the potential for danger, even disaster. . . ."

Montgomery: "During lunch I was civil but cool, having nothing to say to this arrogant egomaniac who had publicly demeaned me and attempted to destroy my usefulness as a commander. . . ."

Throughout there is a sense that the more Bradley read after the war from the posthumous papers of his colleagues the less he liked them. But remember, his asperity is retrospective; at the time he maintained a self-control so tight as to be astonishing.

On the other hand, Bradley writes generously of many of his colleagues. Despite vehement disagreements with many in the British high command he has high praise for Alan Brooke, the little known but brilliant Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and Lord Tedder, Eisenhower's deputy commander and an air strategist of some renown. Among the Americans he displays what can only be termed reverence for George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff. Indeed, his ambivalent feelings toward Eisenhower in his later years seem to stem in large part from his fury at Eisenhower's willingness to embrace Marshall's personal detractors during the 1952 presidential campaign. Other generals who attract his regard include General J. Lawton ("Lightning Joe") Collins, James Van Fleet, and Matthew Ridgway, all of them, like Bradley, hard-working professionals: men about whom it might be difficult to make gripping movies, but the kind of men who win wars.

There is much else in this fascinating memoir—the uses and perils of the Ultra intercepts of German communications; Bradley's account of the unification debate in the late 1940s (centering on the roles of the three services and the future of the new Department of Defense); and above all his role in the firing of General Douglas MacArthur during the Korean War. Indeed, this part of the book, describing his years as Army Chief of Staff and later Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, may be of greater importance to historians than the section on World War II, already covered in some detail in *A Soldier's Story*.

In reviewing Bradley's life we must resist the temptation to say that the American military no longer produces such men. We really don't know, simply because no war since Korea has presented the kind of challenges to which Bradley responded. By comparison with the Army of the 1920s and 1930s, in which he grew up, the Army of the 1980s is wealthy and numerous—harder working, too. Yet one may wonder whether the poverty and leisure of the interwar Army did not help to shape the character and capabilities of men like Bradley, Ridgway, Collins, McNair (the director of the Army's training program), Stilwell, and Van Fleet. The paucity of resources available to them encouraged an ingenuity and innovativeness in training which would stand them in good stead when the time came to train millions of draftees in two or three short years and then lead them into battle. The leisure encouraged some, by no means all, and not even most, to study their profession carefully. Bradley records the long afternoons

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spent in out-of-the-way posts reading military history and working out tactical problems, all of which helped prepare him for the unforeseeable challenges and stresses of high command.

By contrast, the Army of today contains an officer corps of extremely hardworking men and women—an officer corps with virtually no leisure for independent professional study, an officer corps whose members' marriages suffer and often break down because of long hours and lengthy absences from home, an officer corps which often pursues its advanced education in areas only marginally related to the art of war. It is an officer corps which could benefit from having Bradley as a model rather than Patton, to remind itself that competence does not require bluster, that courtesy and gentility need not detract from firmness, that integrity remains the foundation of leadership. □

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
Ronald W. Clark / Random House / $22.95

Tom Wendel

With predictable regularity, one-volume biographies of the incomparable Benjamin Franklin issue forth from the nation's presses. Biographers who tackle the "first American" come in two categories: the Generalist and the Specialist. The Generalist has a little background in a few of the aspects of Franklin's career. He is usually broadly familiar with American revolutionary historiography and the intellectual currents of the Enlightenment. But about electrical currents and other scientific matters he is a novice. Even worse, he has little knowledge of colonial Pennsylvania, the arena in which Franklin won his first political battles.

The Specialist, on the other hand, comes to Franklin through an interest in one of the good doctor's activities, be it medicine, meteorology, autobiography, diplomacy, typography, hydrology, convection, the Constitutional Convention, physiocracy, democracy, music, Pennsylvania, electricity, sociology (as he was the first everything in our history, his "Observations on the Increase of Mankind" make him our first sociologist), the common cold, or the common man. Of all of these and more, their practitioners are drawn to Franklin.

Ronald W. Clark is more of a Specialist than a Generalist, his primary interest being science, or, to be more exact, scientists. He has written biographies of Einstein, Freud, J.B.S. Haldine (biochemist and geneticist), the Huxleys, the philosophical scientist Bertrand Russell, and he is currently working on a biography of Darwin. The emphasis on science is made clear from the striking opening pages of this volume; they deal not with genealogy but with the lightning rod. The book begins *in medias res,* in 1752; the scene is Marly-la-Ville, where the *Frankliniste* François Dalibard verified the identity of electricity and lightning.

The opening pages are a harbinger of things to come. Clark is superb on Franklin as electrician, though for the complete story one must still turn to I. Bernard Cohen's *Franklin and Newton.* Franklin's other scientific interests are expertly—if all too briefly—delineated. The book would have been immensely strengthened had Clark devoted more space to these.

As it is, *Benjamin Franklin* is seriously, maybe crucially, flawed by innumerable historical errors. Here, the Generalist could have come to the aid of the Specialist. One or two errors would be a slight matter, but their multiplication, I should think, is proper cause for comment. Is it carping to point out:

Franklin was 65, not 55, when he began the *Autobiography*. He not only was known to his colleagues as author of the *Dogood Papers,* he himself "discovered" his authorship to them. Ralph did not "abandon" his mistress; he left her in his friend Franklin's eager hands while he found work outside London. There is no certainty as to Franklin's authorship of *A Witch Trial at Mount Holly*. The *Letter to the Royal Academy* was written in the 1780s, not the 1730s. The *General Magazine* was *not* successful; it had a run of only six issues. Pennsylvania's Royal Charter does *not* exempt the Penn family estates from taxation. The Albany Plan of Union did not involve "states," but colonies, and the Stamp Act had no effect on "the United States," which would not be born for another eleven years; and so on, throughout the entire book.

And there are errors of omission as well as commission. Why leave out the archetypical story of young Franklin's bedraggled entrance into Philadelphia, parading before his future wife's house while clumsily holding three great puffy rolls? And why leave out old Franklin's superb vindication when the great Chatham praised him before the House of Lords? The list of omissions would equal that of the commissions, and then there are errors of interpretation. There is really no sense here of the radical Whig milieu from which the American Revolutionaries drew their ideology. Franklin's position on the Anglo-American dispute seems ambiguous at best; he is portrayed as "obsessed" (Franklin is frequently obsessed in this book) with healing the breach, but then in the Hutchinson affair he is motivated to bring about "a major row or confrontation" to resolve the dispute (which, among other things, was simply not Franklin's style). And although Clark is excellent on the affair of the Hutchinson letters, he attributes too much to that crisis. It is doubtful that it made the Revolution inevitable.

Which brings us to hyperbole: Franklin had "almost alone given Philadelphia the library, the hospi-

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Tom Wendel is professor of history at San Jose State University and author of Benjamin Franklin and the Politics of Liberty.

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tal. . . ." Franklin's work in France "made American victory possible." Although such examples abound, Clark's book, in all fairness, is not hagiographical. Nor is it without other positive attributes, the above error list notwithstanding.

Among these are Clark's frequently admirable style and the interesting bibliography particularly strong in English sources. The book is full of cogent quotations from Franklin and his contemporaries. Myriad unusual details hold the reader's attention; so does Clark's ability to "spin a yarn": even though we know how it all comes out, there is some real suspense here.

If we can excuse Clark's errors, then, his *Benjamin Franklin* is an enjoyable and readable account. But by virtue of its one-volume format, it is also an incomplete account: what is needed is a multi-volume "Franklin," written by a Generalist willing to become a Specialist. We have multi-volume biographies of relatively dull people like George Washington and James Madison. Why not one of Franklin? A book published in 1977 shows the way: Arthur Bernon Tourtellot's *Benjamin Franklin, the Shaping of Genius: the Boston Years*. Its fascinating and learned 440 pages take us to the year 1723—Franklin to age seventeen. Far better that someone pick up that challenge than for one more redundancy to appear, no matter how felicitous it may be. □

SPECTATOR'S JOURNAL

NORMAN MAILER TURNS VICTIM

by Peter Shaw

Norman Mailer's 700-page Egyptian epic, *Ancient Evenings,** is a work so heavy and convoluted that one would have expected a reluctance among reviewers to assess it fully on short notice. Yet most newspaper and magazine reviews did not hesitate to reject the book out of hand. In the past Mailer's merest efforts, even when they were self-proclaimedly vehicles for making money, had met with a respect they hardly deserved. Now his most serious and ambitious work, written over a ten-year period (during which he published three other books), was greeted with an unprecedented, easy condescension. This new attitude, whose source evidently lay outside literature, was in some ways more interesting than *Ancient Evenings* itself.

The novel is set in the Egyptian Pharaoh's court and its environs. Apparently convinced that illusion and reality were indistinguishable for the ancients, Mailer attempts to capture the period's mystical spirit. His hero's life spans some hundred and eighty years and permits a view of every level of Egyptian society. Menenhetet I, who narrates much of the book, has risen from peasant origins to the army, the aristocracy, and the inner world of the Pharaoh's court. He has also experienced the mysteries of death and rebirth.

The prelude to Menenhetet's story, which concentrates on the reign of Rameses II (the Ozymandias of Shelley's poem), describes the marriage of the gods Isis and Osiris, who were brother and sister, and the three-day, hand-to-hand battle between their son Horus and his uncle Set. The incestuous and anal passions of the gods are enacted by their human counterparts for whom these profane matters become the objects of religious and metaphysical speculation. Mailer's well-known excremental ponderings are here based on the Egyptian use of the scarab or dung beetle, which was the hieroglyph for creation. Pharaohs commemorated themselves in golden icons of this tiny creature that rolls up its freshly laid egg in a ball of dung. In partial reference to Egyptian fascination with the dung beetle, Mailer's Menenhetet is also known as Meni-Ka, the second part of which stands for "feces." The reviewers were vastly amused to report that *Ancient Evenings* thereby came down to being a treatise on ca ca. "Perhaps it's stunted and philistine of me," wrote James Wolcott in *Harper's, New York* magazine, picking up a quip once made by Gore Vidal, offered H.P. Lovecraft as a model. Benjamin De Mott in the *New York Times Book Review* found the characters "ludicrous blends of Mel Brooks and the Marquis de Sade." For the *Boston Globe* the whole undertaking was so much "rubbish," while for *Time* magazine it was of "utterly invisible significance."

The book undeniably lays itself open to parody. Its invented, portentous language of no time or place; its ponderous, decorously salacious renderings of unusual sex acts; and above all Mailer's projection onto his characters of his favorite macho conceits are transparent failures. On the other hand, if *Ancient Evenings* was a failure it remained a serious work. This had to be evident even to those reviewers who failed to note that its model for approaching the ancient world was Thomas Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers.* As for the ideas relating excrement and sex, these derived from D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* and Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death.* The mythology, moreover, appears to have come straight from J.G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough.*

Mailer's aspirations were those of the classic modern works that, starting with *The Waste Land,* attempted to probe ancient mysteries through Frazerian and other modern paradigms. As Frazer himself wrote in the section of his book on the mutilated and reborn god Osiris: "It would be to misjudge ancient religion to denounce as lewd and profligate the emblems and ceremonies which the Egyptians employed for the purpose of giving effect to [their] conception of the divine power." That reviewers felt free to denounce the subject matter in just these terms, and with self-confessed philistinism at that, was a measure of the present revolt against high modernism. But something besides this revolt had taken place since Mailer's last major work: namely, his involvement in the Jack Abbott affair.

Abbott was the convicted murderer

*Little, Brown & Co., $19.95.

Peter Shaw has written for Commentary, *the* New Criterion, *and other periodicals. He is author, most recently, of* American Patriots and the Rituals of Revolution (*Harvard*).

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whose release from prison Mailer had helped to secure. The literary world began by adopting Abbott, greeting him at parties and praising his book of scattered prison impressions. He was, he explained, working for Mailer: "doing research on hieroglyphics for his new novel on Egypt." Then, in July 1981, it became known that Abbott had killed again, savagely stabbing to death a young actor and part-time waiter in Greenwich Village. For once public outrage was matched by outrage in the literary community—and much of the resentment quite properly came to rest on Mailer.

Previously not even Mailer's own stabbing of his wife had fully brought home the possible consequences of his ideas about violence. Now, confronted by an outraged press after the killing, Mailer would not admit that he had been wrong to help set the murderer loose. For some his self-justification proved to be more shocking than the murder itself. "I'm willing to gamble with a portion of society to save this man's talent," Mailer declared. And later in a television interview he maintained that violence by an individual is as nothing when compared to the organized violence of the State.

When asked for an example of violence worse than Jack Abbott's murder of an innocent young man, Mailer suggested to Dick Cavett, the talk show host:

> Take these very dull housing projects. They're built very cheaply. They have narrow hallways. They—if you have a lively kid who's 14 or 15 or 16, and you have him waiting for an elevator on the 12th floor for 12 minutes . . . that's not going to reduce his violence; that's going to increase it.

Not only is the State more violent than the individual, in other words, but it bears the responsibility for violent acts committed by the individual. The theory was not new. But this time it had been challenged by an example—that of Jack Abbott—that not even the fuzziest of literary intelligences could any longer ignore.

In *Ancient Evenings* Mailer made the mistake of continuing, albeit in a high-toned manner, his celebration of violence and brutality. Most shocking of all, he offered a heroic presentation of the male dominance by anal rape that had been Jack Abbott's prison legacy. As *Ancient Evenings* appeared, two newspaper stories recalled the connections between Mailer's ideas and reality. First it was reported that Mailer had testified in court to the character of yet another friend—his handyman and joint house owner, Richard Stratton—who was accused of conspiracy to smuggle marijuana and hashish. Stratton was found guilty and sentenced to 15 years in jail. Soon afterward, as chance would have it, a New York City judge, fearing for the safety of a slightly built, 36-year-old first-time drug offender, ordered that he be held separately from other prisoners in protective confinement. When the Corrections Department ignored the judge's order, the man was "raped by four or five men in a receiving cell."

In the face of such reminders as these of Mailer's ideas, it was no wonder that his new novel was treated as something less than a purely literary document. Of course this was a regrettable outcome, for it demonstrated not only how far modernism had declined in prestige, but also a widespread impatience with the modulations and interventions of literary discourse itself. Yet one could not help feeling that if these developments had to occur, it was fitting that Mailer should be their casualty. After all, over the years no one had done more than he to break down the separation between literature and life. □

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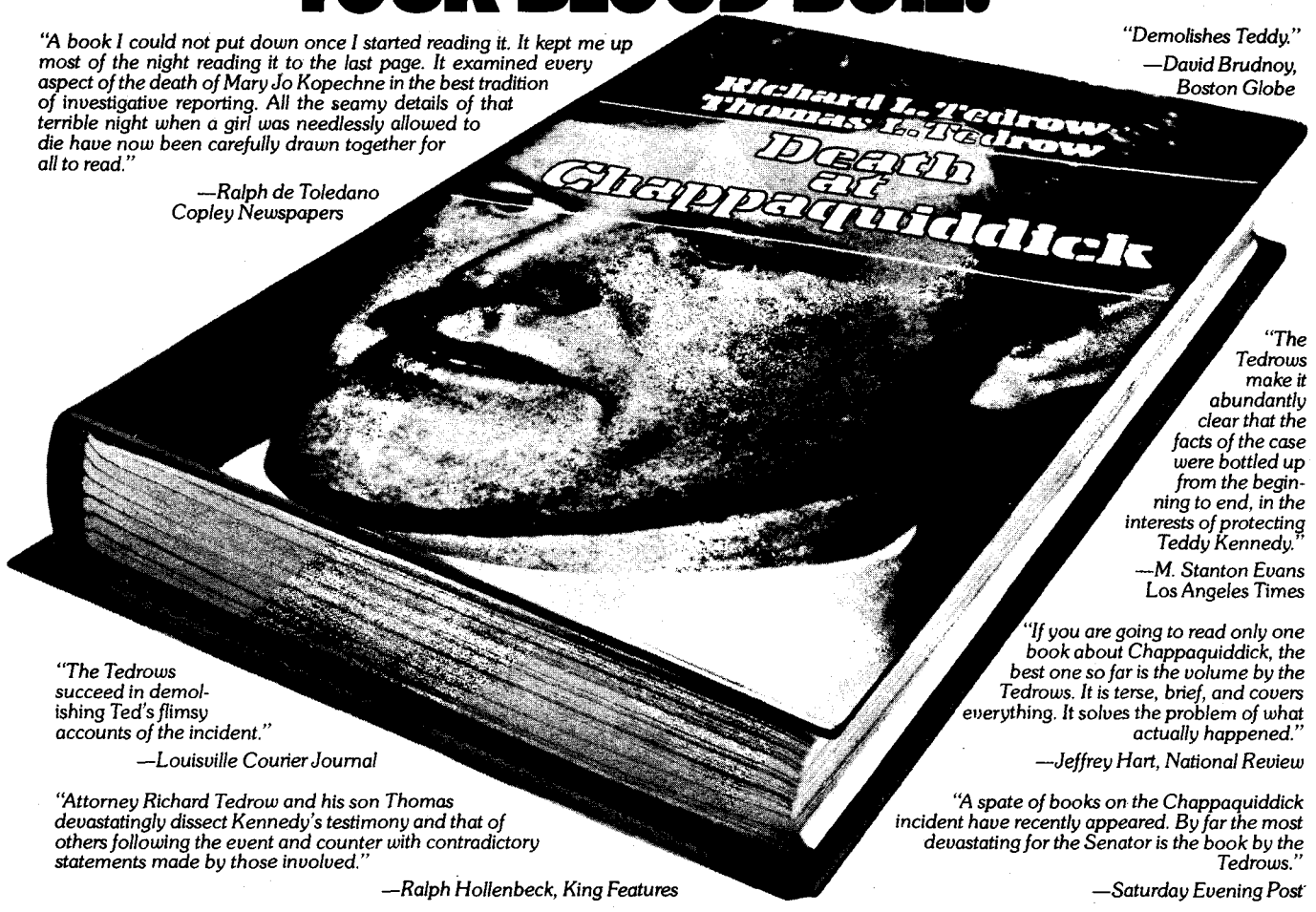

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article from various groups rather than to single out one profession. If he were to present a fair and truly intelligent piece of writing, he would have written about *individuals* in many areas, for example: the corporate heads, professional persons such as physicians, attorneys, bankers, sportsmen and athletes, etc., who get caught up in the same or similar traps. I found this author to be narrow-minded, somewhat ignorant, and abusive to one professional group as a whole. . . .

I consider Mr. Stein's article to be detrimental to the personal integrity of an entire group made up of so many flight attendants who are intelligent, discriminating, sincere, hard-working, professional individuals. Perhaps Mr. Stein should research the group whom he has so unjustly singled out and write another piece illustrating the "other side of the coin."

—Deanna McSwain
(flight attendant for a major airline for 17½ years)
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Benedictine Joe

Reviewing Robert J. Donovan's *Tumultuous Years* (*TAS,* July 1983), John Lewis Gaddis makes the following aside:

(In discussing Joe McCarthy's famous canard that too much "bourbon and Benedictine" caused Truman to fire MacArthur . . . Donovan wonders, with the good sense that comes from having been there, whether anyone can really imagine the embattled Chief Executive imbibing the latter beverage.)

Perhaps both writers underestimate McCarthy, a student of spirits himself who surely knew that Truman did not favor liqueurs. Is it not more likely that he chose the word "Benedictine" for its resonance, far below the surface of the mind, with the name of a certain Revolutionary War general? Certainly it would be an adroit way of stirring doubts about the President's patriotism while pretending (if challenged) to be discussing something else.

—Griffin Smith, Jr.
Little Rock, Arkansas

Pussyfooting

Chester E. Finn's "The Policy Wimp Comes of Age" (*TAS*, July 1983) was to the point but his footnote—the only one in the entire paper!—was an ant on the cheese; his slang dictionary defined "wimp" as "a weak, ineffectual, insipid person." But that is a horrible, simply horrible, half-truth. For the term "wimp" is first of all an acronym and it celebrates its 323rd birthday, September 14, 1983. Its first meaning was "why I must pussyfoot"; Samuel Johnson failed to mention this; therefore sixty years after the Doctor's demise, an apology for Johnson's error was written by Boswell's great-nephew Algernon. Shortly after James Thurber gave us the story of the immortal Walter Mitty, the word "wimp," like many other words, underwent change. It came to mean, "weak, ineffectual, mittyish pretender." And that is what any diligent reader will find in Parmenides's *Slang Dictionary Updated.*

—Bernie Adelman
Winthrop, Massachusetts

Officer Sassoon

In his review of *Siegfried Sassoon Diaries* (*TAS,* July 1983) Thomas Mallon remarks on Sassoon's willingness to return to the war, even after he had "found out" its horrors.

An experienced infantry officer or NCO knows that his presence on the battlefield can help keep alive younger or less-experienced soldiers. He can read the signs in terrain, vegetation, and in the behavior of civilians which foretell the imminence of contact with the enemy.

The survival of any soldier is less important than his unit's accomplishing its mission. And the survival of a unit is less important than an army successfully defending the republic it serves.

—Robert P. Fairchild
(member of U.S. 25th Infantry Division, 1967-1968)
Fort Monroe, Virginia

A Woman's Place

As a member of a woman-dominated profession (nursing), I was frustrated reading Bruce Powell Majors' article "Women's Worth" in your July issue. His arguments were compelling, but their logic was undermined by the type of misconceptions—at least about nursing—that give credibility to those who would argue for comparable worth legislation.

For instance, monitoring equipment in hospitals is *not* less labor intensive. Anyone who has ever been in an intensive care unit knows that equipment requires more nurses, not fewer. It is the nurses who have to interpret the output and troubleshoot the hardware, not to mention take care of the patient.

As for jobs held by women requiring fewer skills and being less challenging: does Mr. Majors think that nursing skills consist only of making beds and administering medications? All one need do is look at a current nursing textbook to see how complex a profession nursing really is. In 1975-76, I was the head nurse of a 34-bed intensive care nursery and made less money than a garbage collector. Who does Mr. Majors think had the more challenging career?

Implicit in Mr. Majors' argument is the premise that in order to get more money, a woman must enter a male-dominated profession. Like the Russians, this country seems to have adopted the attitude that if men do it, it's worthwhile; if women do it, it's expendable.

—Linda Friedel
Merrimack, New Hampshire

Bruce Powell Majors replies:

Miss Friedel's objections seem plausible, and deal with matters of detail (the nursing profession) about which her competence surely far exceeds mine.

However, as she recognizes, these details by no means constitute a case for the imposition of comparable worth regulations on market processes. She states that more "units" of nursing service are needed in order to care for the same number of patients, after the introduction of monitoring equipment (which presumably raises the quality of overall health service to each patient). While this may be true of the particular monitoring equipment with which Miss Friedel is familiar, it remains true that comparable worth regulations (or any other taxes or regulations that raise the price of labor) will either raise the price of the service, thereby diminishing the demand for the service, or induce the employer to use more capital intensive production processes (for which I took "monitoring equipment" as a placeholder or symbol). Such choices mean fewer jobs, as even the Institute for Policy Studies' official socialist-feminist, Barbara Ehrenreich, has admitted.

As to the relative wages of nurses and garbage collectors—we cannot predict what the market, i.e., consumers, will need to offer nurses or garbage collectors to induce potential nurses and potential garbage collectors to take these jobs and provide these services. The determination of wages depends on an uncountable variety of factors (e.g., how many people find which job more disagreeable). This is why these wages cannot be "planned" beforehand: we don't and can't know these myriad and changing factors ahead of time. (In addition, the wages of both nurses and garbage collectors are currently determined largely by licensure laws and state empowered "public" sector unions—which is perhaps why some find the United States to have a shortage of nurses, and inadequate trash collection.)

Miss Friedel also asks if I think women must enter male-dominated professions to earn wages typical of men. Although I am not in the business of giving such advice, my answer is basically "yes." If a woman wants to earn the wages traditionally paid to a man, she must act, in the economic realm, like the men have acted. She must place her career above domestic chores, her spouse's relocation, and personal care of children—either by remaining single, sharing her life with someone who accepts all (or at least half) the duties of hearth and home, or paying for the commercial provision of these services.

In short, most of us cannot have it all. I assure Miss Friedel that this bitter truth has many manifestations about which almost any of us must have our occasional regrets. □

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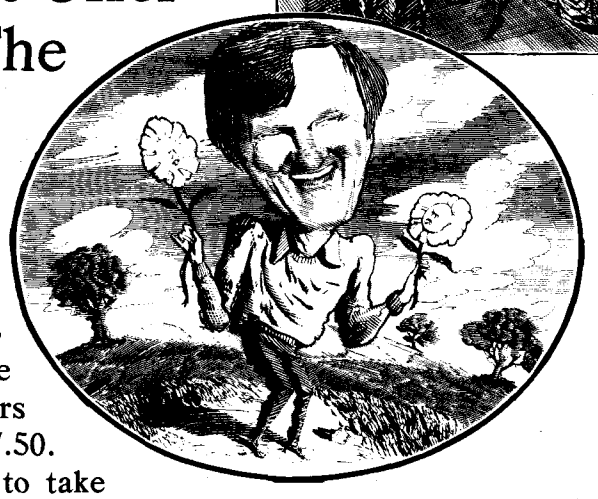

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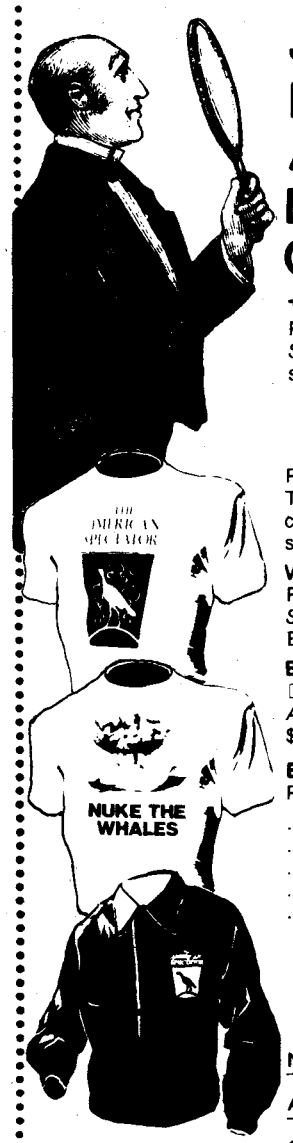

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Reflections on the mental hygiene of chief executives from one who ought to know:

Our leaders prate of self-defense, bankrupting the future generations of our nation to supply our generals and admirals with the deadly toys of their trade. Self-defense is a fatuous concept. There can be no defense against madmen and fools. And we have no guarantee that the men who have access to the nuclear triggers are not fools or madmen. On the contrary, it is a pretty good bet that among this select handful of the world's nuclear commanders there are some whose mental and emotional stability could not withstand close scrutiny. And it takes only one.

The Conservators
by Elliott Roosevelt
[*Arbor House, 1983*]

The Atlanta Constitution

A historic alarum sounded by a Georgia aesthete in the pages of the renowned *Atlanta Constitution*:

—$250 REWARD—

For information resulting in the recovery of two abstract tempora finger paintings, removed from my office at 2120 Marletta Blvd. in May or June 1975.

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One painted by a chimpanzee from Atlanta's Yerkes Primate Center.

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[*June 1, 1983*]

The Washington Post

The latest orphic findings of Dr. Shirley MacLaine, adviser to Presidents:

"Everything that I've said or believed, seeming to be gullible and naive at the time, turned out to be true! Whether it was George McGovern or feminism or China or *name* it. It seems naive when I say it, but it does come to pass. Usually."

She bites into a black olive.

"I'm gonna be too soon on this too for some people, but that's what I've chosen for myself and that's the way it is."

In the book, she describes a long, passionate love affair with a member of the British Parliament whom she calls "Gerry." She declines to reveal his identity. But she knows that the two have shared past lives together. Still, she's no longer looking for a man to "ratify the other half of my existence." She crunches on a scallion. "I AM my other half. I think I'm terrific," she grins.

She says she doesn't have a clue what her next incarnation will be. "Ask me that question when I've had my final shot at this one," she says, polishing off a slice of chocolate espresso cheesecake and asking the waiter to wrap up the remains of the salad bowl so she can munch on it in her hotel room later.

"Maybe I'll just loll around up in the astral plane for a while."

[*June 21, 1983*]

Unitarian Universalist World

The march of civilization as reported in a leading theological journal published on Gutenberg's marvel:

Several of those present felt strongly that the Judeo-Christian teachings were inherently sexist and could not be salvaged. The Rev. Linnea Pearson pointed to the neo-pagan groups growing in popularity today. These groups, she felt, were of interest to UUs in three ways.

First, she noted, the pagans speak of the god and goddess within—an internalization of religion.

Second, she stressed the pagans' concern for the well-being of the earth and their emphasis on our interdependence with every part of the natural world. She noted the neo-pagan's use of scientific and psychological interpretations of the cycles of nature and seasons of human growth.

Third, Ms. Pearson pointed out the shared leadership, the shared freedom and shared responsibility. The neo-pagans have no creeds and no scriptures, she said.

The Rev. Maryell Cleary added the following anecdote:

Since taking on this assignment I have tried using the word "goddess" instead of the word "god" in all the customary ways. As an expletive: "By Goddess,"—"Goddess damn it!" "Thank Goddess," "Goddess is in her heaven, all's right with the world." And lots of other ways.

[*November 15, 1982*]

The Washington Post

As they say in Boston, more mush from the wimp:

Former President Jimmy Carter said . . . today that President Reagan's support of the government of El Salvador was underwriting a regime that was "the most bloodthirsty in our hemisphere, perhaps in the world" and he accused the administration of taking "the leadership role" in trying to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

[*July 20, 1983*]

Express

(The East Bay's Free Weekly)

Revelations of a modern-day Juliet full of wheat germ and pamphlets:

This quest for miso and macho in one man was driven home to me some years ago while driving home from a feminist conference with a woman who called herself Shanti Litvok (not her real name). Shanti, a sensitive soul if ever there was one, had done time in every ashram from here to Delhi. Yet it turns out she had finally achieved Perfect Bliss with a simple flesh and blood man, an artist, a sculptor who possessed "magic fingers." Not only could he cook up a mean bowl of tofu but he would often pause in the middle to grab Shanti, throw her over his shoulder, and carry her up to the bedroom. "You know," she said, pausing to cast a glance towards Mecca, "sometimes you really need that male energy."

[*May 6, 1983*]

San Francisco Chronicle

Proof that Jimmy Carter's promise to bring us the best was fulfilled:

Alcee Hastings, Florida's first black federal judge, has accused President Reagan of being "a racist."

". . . [I]t's just a matter of time before you realize deceit for what it is—deceit. Reagan was a racist on the eve that he came here and he was a racist on the eve that he left."

Hastings said Reagan is "a racist in more senses than we can imagine. Racism connotates power. Most people don't begin to understand or do not ponder what the meaning of power really is."

Hastings, appointed to the bench in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter, became the first sitting federal judge to be tried on criminal charges.

[*June 10, 1983*]

Ann Arbor News

Propitious signs espied by an eminent augur of the progressive school:

Yale came to Harvard in the person of Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Garry Trudeau, who said he sees signs that college students are about to begin another cycle of protest activity like in the '60s. Trudeau, who attended Yale, has taken a sabbatical from his cartoon strip "Doonesbury." He told a Harvard Class Day audience Wednesday that he based his feelings partly on student reaction to recent campus appearances by United Nations Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick. "When Jeane Kirkpatrick appears before an audience she is submitting her ideas for approval," he said. "When she is unceremoniously hooted from the stage as she was at Berkeley this year, she is experiencing a free and open society at its most bracing."

[*June 9, 1983*]

The Chicago Tribune

Proof that wimpishness has moved beyond the world of unisex and graduate schools of education:

Convicted mass murderer Richard Speck says he has changed since 1966 when he stabbed eight Chicago student nurses to death in a frenzied attack that some heralded at the time as the crime of the century.

"I'm a marshmallow," the 41-year-old convict said in a rare, copyrighted interview published Friday in the Rockford Register Star.

[*June 18, 1983*]

The San Francisco Bay Guardian

The post-Feminist blues before the catatonic trance:

San Francisco is a lonely place when you're a single woman and all the straight men you know are undesirables. You might be inclined to go dancing, or sip espresso in North Beach, but if you don't have purple hair, or a knowledge of avant-garde theater, or a steady date, then the only seat reserved for you is in some singles bar on Union Street. So I walked into a high-tech restaurant, sat at the neon red-and-white bar and ordered a neat J & B (because you can't order a pina colada when you're sitting alone).

Of course, women still aren't supposed to sit alone in public even if *Cosmopolitan* says it's OK, which is why the bartender threw me a piercingly knowing look when he handed me my drink. But his eyes were sympathetic—he'd seen me there before—and when he remarked, "Scotch is a pretty strong drink for a woman out alone," I knew he already understood my story.

"I had a date tonight, but he left."

[*May 4, 1983*]

Chicago Sun-Times

High drama in the realm of social nomenclature as reported in one of the Windy City's famed organs of info:

Many women who say they detest first-naming by doctors they don't really know are reluctant to object. "He's like God," one normally hard-bitten Washington career woman said.

Ellen Warren, a member of the Sun-Times Washington bureau, said she gets "livid" when her male gynecologist calls her "Ellen." She is diffident about calling him "Don" and is "damned if I'll call him Doctor," so the upshot is that Warren calls her physician nothing.

[*June 2, 1983*]

The Daily Californian

A sought-after campus sage breaks wind at UC Berkeley, as reported in that university's illustrious newspaper:

Calling for change in national and individual priorities, political activist and comedian Dick Gregory had strong words to say about government, President Reagan, education and race relations during a speech Friday in Zellerbach Auditorium.

"We talk like we had everything before Reagan got in and how we lost it when he did get in," Gregory said to a two-thirds filled Zellerbach Auditorium. "What's taken you so long to realize that Reagan don't like you at all?"

"This jelly-bean eating thug says that national defense is important. But national defense starts at home," Gregory said, criticizing the president's budget priorities. The activist said that arrests of elderly people increased last year by 80 percent and that most occurred in supermarkets where people were stealing food. . . .

Gregory had much criticism for the education system. "College teaches you how to make a living, but it doesn't teach you how to live," Gregory said, complaining that curricula are set and do not allow for diversity.

"There's not one class dealing with racism," Gregory said. "There's no class 'required' on how to deal with sexism." He likened the education system to a "cesspool" from which students are fed into a green machine to make money.

[*February 7, 1983*]

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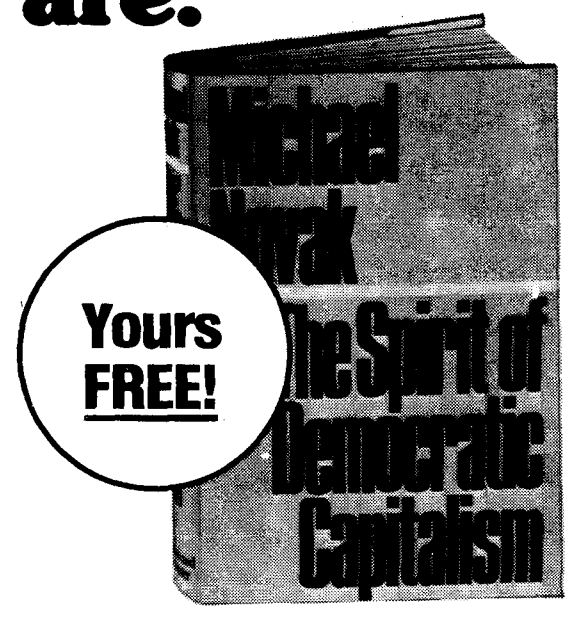

***From Samuel McCracken's extraordinary review in* Commentary:**

It is not so easy to exculpate those who still hold to the superstitions of socialism. Whatever can be said of the status of Marxist theory, the failure — utter, consistent, and continuing — of Marxist practice is apparent to anyone with eyes to see....It has not been clear why socialism should be so esteemed despite its failure and — the inevitable corollary — capitalism so despised despite its success; most observers who have found the situation troubling enough to warrant attention have confined themselves to vague speculations about the contrariness of intellectuals. Now, Michael Novak has made some progress in clearing this matter up for us, but this is only a fringe benefit of his remarkable book. For *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* is perhaps the first serious attempt to construct a theology of capitalism. That this very phrase rings a little strange in the ears even of sympathetic hearers testifies to the compromised reputation of democratic capitalism even among many of its friends....

Novak rehabilitates the moral stature of democratic capitalism by showing how little it resembles the caricatures of it which pass almost everywhere as analytic descriptions....Latin America did not develop largely because it did not adopt an economic system that allowed development. Moreover, the Catholic Church was originally hostile to capitalism because of conservative objections to liberalism: what the 19th-century Church attacked as "*liberalismo*" always proves upon analysis to be democratic capitalism. Ironically, the liberation theologians, opposed to the traditional hierarchy in everything else, agree with it in despising capitalism and seeing it as the author of much woe for Latin America.

And so the Church, by opposing capitalism, appears to Novak as a major cause of poverty in Latin America. This is not an isolated instance for Novak: following a seminal study by H.R. Trevor-Roper, he traces the comparative affluence of Catholic and Protestant Europe, nearly always to the embarrassment of the former. Novak's own Church, then, becomes one of the causes of poverty in large parts of the world....This is, of course, a remarkable argument to be made by a leading Catholic intellectual, particularly one who is not only a theologian but a theologian far from the fashionable fringes of theological innovation — one who, for example, seems wholly comfortable talking about God as if He undoubtedly exists and as if the universe makes the most sense if one assumes that He not only created it but takes a continuing interest in it.

...Novak rejects democratic socialism as firmly as he does the totalitarian variant, even though until comparatively recently he was himself a democratic socialist. His account of his own movement from Christian socialism to democratic capitalism is insightful and astringent. As a budding Catholic intellectual, he tells us, he read heavily in those European writers who saw capitalism as "protestant": anarchic, individualistic, rejecting of tradition. He once found this position persuasive, but now believes it to have been a misguided nostalgia for village values considered in those days one of the good things about the Middle Ages. He continued to believe in socialism, as do a great many intellectuals, religious or irreligious, because its ostensible ethical system seemed so superior to that of capitalism. It took some time more for him to conclude that "the dream of democratic socialism is inferior to the dream of democratic capitalism, and that the latter's superiority in actual practice is undeniable."

This statement might well serve as the epigraph of the book....Each of the parts of the statement is important: it is not unusual for men to believe that capitalism in practice is superior to socialism in practice, a conclusion which leaves room for the perennial and damaging belief that if only socialism were done right it would bring on the millennium. But Novak maintains — with a richness of analysis that challenges the reviewer — that socialism is also inferior to capitalism in theory....Novak's most important achievement is to spell this superiority out in detail, especially in the ethical area which most intellectuals have long conceded to socialism....

One need not share Novak's religious perspective on capitalism to find this book a stunning achievement, but those who have hitherto preferred socialism on religious, or indeed on purely ethical, grounds must now face an argument of immense weight — and one produced by a former fellow believer. If enough of them read it, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* may prove one of those rare books that actually changes the way things are.

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